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CRUG Y BWDRAN, BRECHFA, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY (CM074)

By

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad yma at ddefnydd y cwsmer yn unig. Ni dderbynnir cyfrifoldeb gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf am ei ddefnyddio gan unrhyw berson na phersonau eraill a fydd yn ei ddarllen neu ddibynnu ar y gwybodaeth y mae'n ei gynnwys

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake an archaeological survey of Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074, SN 55640 39575) following damage occurring during forestry activities. The site and extent of the damage was recorded, and recommendations made for remediation.

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archaeolegol DAT i ymgymryd â arolwg archeolegol o grugiau crwn Crug y Bwdran (CM074, SN 55640 39575) yn dilyn difrod a ddigwyddodd yn ystod gweithgareddau coedwigaeth. Cofnodwyd safle a maint y difrod, a gwnaed argymhellion ar gyfer gwaith adfer.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Proposals and Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services, in response to a request from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), were commissioned to undertake a survey of Crug y Bwdran, a Bronze Age round barrow site and Scheduled Monument (CM074), on the edge of Brechfa Forest, to the north of Brechfa, Carmarthenshire (centred on SN 55640 39575, Figures 1 and 2). The work was commissioned to assess damage that had occurred to the monument during forestry activities, and to inform the future management of the site.
- 1.1.2 The damage had occurred the previous summer, in May 2021. The site lies within an area of commercial forestry, and the field within which the site lies was being prepared for planting. During this process the dollop plough encroached onto the remains of the barrow, disturbing the ground in several locations. The site was subsequently visited on the 6th May 2021 by representatives from both NRW and Cadw to assess the extent of the damage.
- 1.1.3 In order to fully record the extent of the damage, and to inform the appropriate methodology for repair if required, and future management, DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to survey the site and areas of damage and produce a report on their findings.
- 1.1.4 DAT Archaeological Services is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), and all fieldwork is undertaken in accordance with the relevant *Code of Conduct* and *Standard and Guidance* documents produced by CIfA (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Scope of the Project

- 1.2.1 The project objectives were:
 - To identify areas of damage and the presence/absence of any exposed archaeological deposits
 - To produce an accurate survey of the site and areas of damage.
 - To appropriately record the site and any archaeological deposits affected by the previous groundworks.
 - To produce an archive and report of any results.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 A site visit was carried out on the 17th June 2022. 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 DAT Archaeological Services.
- 1.3.2 The site was surveyed using a Trimble R8 with integrated GNSS system with a TSC3 controller. Photographs were taken in high resolution digital images, stored as Tiffs and Jpegs. A written record of the site visit was taken in note form.

¹ 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.

1.4 Report Outline

- 1.4.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork was 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.
- 1.4.2 This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background, presents the archaeological survey results, and provides a summary and discussion of the survey and its results.

1.5 Abbreviations

1.5.1 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.

1.6 Illustrations

1.6.1 Photographic images are to be found within the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale.

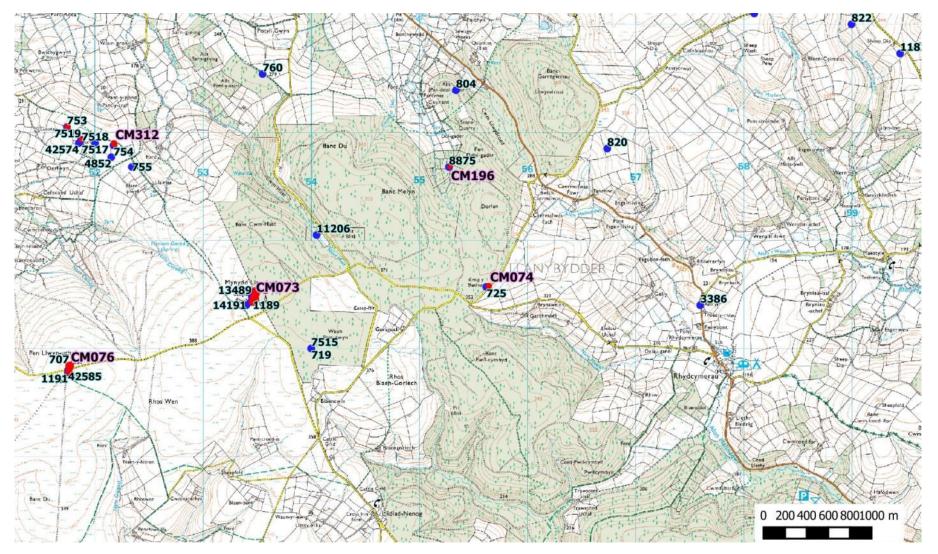


Figure 1: Location map showing Crug y Bwdran CM074 in the centre, with surrounding Scheduled Monuments in red (labelled by Cadw reference number), and Bronze Age sites recorded on the HER in blue (labelled by PRN)

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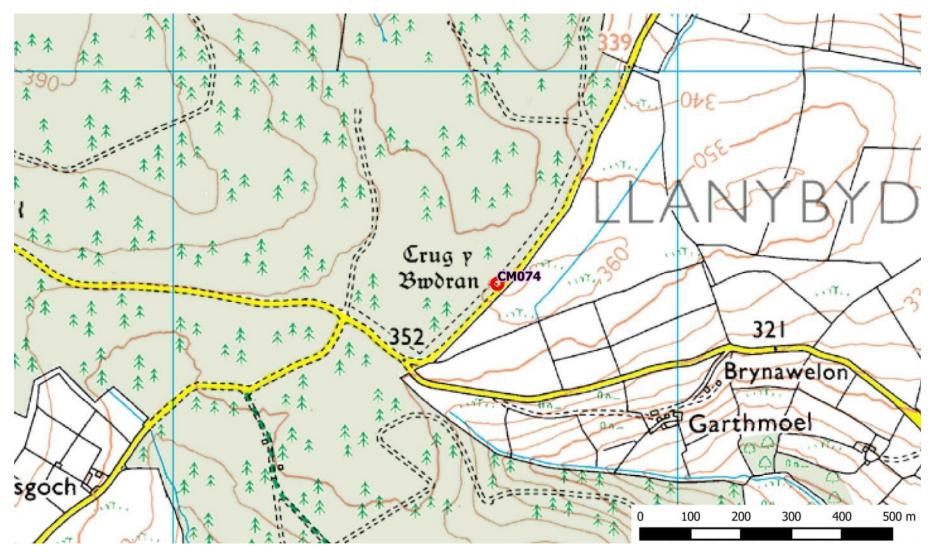


Figure 2: Detailed location map of Crug y Bwdran CM074.

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2. The Site

2.1 Location and Topography

- 2.1.1 The turf and scrub-covered remains of Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074) lie near the summit of an area of high ground on the edge of Brechfa Forest, within a larger landscape of gently undulating land cut by local stream valleys, known as Mynydd Llanybyther (Figs 1 & 2). The barrow lies on the north to westerly facing slopes just below the summit, at approximately 360mOD. The site is overlooked by slightly higher ground a short distance to the east, but otherwise offers relatively extensive views in all directions, although woodland plantations currently limit extensive views to the south and west.
- 2.1.2 The site is currently located close to the eastern edge of an extensive area of managed coniferous forestry, the surrounding area largely harvested at the time of the survey. A local road runs southwest northeast just to the east of the site, separating the woodland from an area of enclosed upland grazing beyond. Extensive managed woodland extends to the north, west and south of the site. To the east lie smaller enclosed fields, a mixture of rough grazing and improved pasture enclosed by post and wire fencing with hedgebanks on the lower slopes. Dispersed farmsteads are dotted around the lower slopes of the surrounding stream valleys, with the village of Rhydcymerau lying 2.2km to the east. The closest larger settlement is Llanybydder, which lies 5.5km to the northwest, Brechfa lies nearly 10km to the south.
- 2.1.3 The underlying bedrock comprises interbedded mudstones and sandstones of the Ruddnant Grits Formation (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 Crug v Bwdran (CM074, PRN 725) is the site of a Bronze Age round barrow. These barrows are characteristic features of the Bronze Age, typically dating to around 3500 to 5500 years ago. Such sites are often raised above burials, and contain later burials inserted into them, but other features and structures may also lie underneath and within suggesting a wider variety of ritual activity associated with them. Generally, such monuments are found in prominent upland locations, and whilst the lack of development in these areas may be a contributory factor to their survival it is also often thought that visibility played an important role in their siting. A study of such monuments in east Carmarthenshire suggests "It seems likely that the visibility from and to sites and the visibility between sites was a key factor in the determination of site location...a common topographic location for the round barrows...was on or near a fairly rounded summit on a gently sloping hillslope, which tended to get steeper towards the bottom" (Cook et al 2003). A further study by Davey (2002) also found such sites favoured gentle slopes and high elevations, particularly west and south-facing aspects (avoiding north facing aspects).
- 2.2.2 Crug y Bwdran earthwork was partially excavated in 1924, described by Eyre-Evans (1925). The original description of this excavation has not been examined, but according to the scheduling description a stone kerb and 14 fragments of urn were discovered, which would appear to confirm this as the site of a Bronze Age round barrow.
- 2.2.3 The site appears relatively isolated but may represent only the visible remains of a wider complex of now-buried features, particularly given the site is overlooked by slightly higher ground to the east. There are other Bronze Age monuments in the area to indicate a wider complex of funerary and ritual activity across the landscape during the Bronze Age period (see Fig 1). A

series of barrows complexes lie on the summits of high ground extending off to the west and southwest, including the Crugiau Edryd complex 2km away (CM073, PRNs 710, 1188, 1189, 1190, 11491 & 13489), the Crug y Biswal complex a further 1.7km on (CM076, PRNs 707, 1191 & 42585) and the Crugiau Leir complex a further 2.3km beyond that (CM163, PRNs 714, 715 & 42584). Many further hilltops to the west and north also contain barrow sites, some well-preserved and others largely denuded (eg PRNs 760, 804 and 820). Generally there appears to be fewer sites to the east, suggesting the prevailing views from the north, anti-clockwise through to the southwest, were significant factors in the siting of this monument. Several standing stones are also recorded in the area, often thought to be contemporary features, the closest such sites being Y Carreg Hir (PRN 718) 1km to the west, and Panteg Stone (CM196, PRN 8875) 1.1km to the northwest. The settlements associated with these sites are less obvious, although a possible settlement site lies at Cwm Hust (PRN 11206), just 1.6km to the west of Crug y Bwdran.

3. SURVEY RESULTS (Figures 3 & 4)

- 3.1 The site was visited on the 17th June 2021. Weather conditions were dry and sunny, and full access to the site was possible.
- 3.2 The barrow is circular in plan, approximately 11m in diameter, and 1m high, the highest point at 361.15mOD. The barrow has a rounded profile, but with the approximately 4m wide summit offset to the southeast. The site is currently covered in low but dense heathland vegetation with a row of small trees to the southeast, and evidence of harvested forestry surrounding the site.
- 3.3 The surrounding topography falls gradually to the northwest and northeast, and continues as a slight rise to the southwest before falling away again. A higher ridge of ground lies to the southeast on the opposite side of the road.

Previous disturbance

- 3.4 Placed roughly central to the summit is a square depression, measuring 0.7m by 0.7m, and 0.3m to 0.4m deep, now vegetation filled. This presumably marks the site of excavations in the 1920s. The southeast edge of the barrow summit is squared, representing either an old erosion scar or further evidence of previous excavation. An irregular sub-circular depression lies on the lower western slopes of the mound, thickly vegetation covered, possibly representing an old erosion scar.
- 3.5 A wooden post lies close to the southern edge of the mound, alongside a former forestry plough line running southwest northeast along the lower southeast edge of the mound. Five large tree stumps are located around the lower edge of the mound to the northwest and north, all removed to ground level and no longer growing.
- 3.6 Two young rowen/ash trees are growing on the summit, one young oak(?) tree is growing on the northwest side of the mound, with two further young oaks(?) growing on the lower edge of the mound, one to the north, and one to the east.

Current damage

- 3.7 The forestry plough damage first noted in May 2021 consists of a number of small irregular rectangular scoops cutting into the ground, generally up to 0.6m wide, and between 0.5m to 1.1m in length. The scoops are typically 0.15m to 0.25m in depth, with many deep enough to remove surface vegetation and the thin topsoil, exposing potential subsoil and archaeological deposits below. Vegetation has begun to regrow over most of the expose soil.
- 3.8 The scoops occur in two main rows across the northwest edge of the barrow, with many more in the surrounding area. The first row runs in a rough southwest to northeast line across the northwest edge of the mound, at most 3m in from the visible outer edge. Five scoops were noted within the above-ground remains of the mound, each set approximately 1m apart. The second row lies approximately 1m further towards the outer edge of the mound, running along the same alignment, with three scoops visible cutting in to the above-ground remains of the mound.
- 3.9 Scoops to the west of the barrow mound (Nos.1,2 & 9) reveal a typical subsoil of mid to light grey-brown to orange-brown clayey silt with common to abundant inclusions of small to medium sub-angular

mudstones. From the western edge of the visible barrow mound the frequency of stone within the revealed deposits increases, and the size of the stone also increases in places, but no clear structural arrangement of stone is distinguishable within the limits of the irregular scoops. Seven of the scoops on the northwest side of the mound also reveal noticeable quantities of quartz, from small fragments to larger pieces up to 0.2m across, but all stonework appears spread and possibly disturbed, with no clear structural elements noted (Nos. 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14 & 15).

3.10 Disturbance in the surrounding area revealing sub-surface deposits suggest further collections of stone and quartz that may be of note given the context of the nearby barrow, or may be an indication of natural spreads of this material. Abundant stone is noted in exposed deposits up to 3.5m to the northwest of the surveyed edge of the barrow (Nos. 16, 17 & 19). Approximately 4m to the north of the barrow exposed deposits include abundant stone, including some larger fragments up to 0.35m across. An increase in fragments of quartz is also noted in this area, typically small in size, at most 0.1m across. These stone and quartz deposits are noted over a rough area up to 7m across (Nos 23 – 26). Similarly, approximately 8m to the northeast exposed deposits reveal larger flat fragments of stone, up to 0.6m across, with smaller fragments of quartz mixed in (Nos. 31 & 32).

Table 1: Recorded areas of damage (see Figure 4)

Area No.	Maximum Dimensions	Description	Photo
1	0.7m x 0.8m, 0.1m deep	-	-
2	0.6m x 0.6m, 0.15m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, common small to medium stone	9
3	0.7m x 0.8m, 0.2m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant small to medium stone	10
4	0.55m x 0.7m, 0.1m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, common small stone	11
5	0.5m x 0.65m, 0.2m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant small to medium stone	12
6	0.55m x 0.45m, 0.25m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant medium to large stone, occasional medium to large quartz	13
7	0.55m x 0.75m, 0.3m deep	Scoop and root damage. Mid grey- brown clayey-silt, common medium to large stone, common medium to large quartz	14
8	0.55m x 0.7m, 0.2m deep	Mid orange-brown clayey-silt, abundant small to medium stone, occasional large quartz	15

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9	0.55m x 0.85m, 0.15m deep	-	-
10	0.6m x 0.55m, 0.1m deep	Largely regrown. Mid orange-brown clayey-silt, common medium to large stone and large quartz	16
11	0.4m x 0.5m, 0.2m deep	Largely regrown. Dark brown topsoil, occasional large stone	17
12	0.65m x 1m	Area of root damage, common medium to large stone visible	-
13	0.65m x 0.7m, 0.25m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant small stone, occasional small to medium quartz	18
14	0.6m x 0.6m, 0.2m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant small stone, occasional small to medium quartz	-
15	0.55m x 1m, 0.15m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant small to medium stone, occasional small to medium quartz	19
16	1.45m x 0.4m, 0.2m deep	Area of tree root damage. Mid grey- brown clayey-silt, occasional medium to large stone.	20
17	0.95m x 0.2m, 0.2m deep	Area of tree root damage, common large to very large stone	21
18	1.5m x 0.3m, 0.2m deep	Area of tree root damage	-
19	0.65m x 0.5m, 0.2m deep	Mid orange-brown clayey-silt, abundant small to medium stone	-
20	0.6m x 0.7m	-	-
21	0.2m x 0.4m	-	-
22	0.45m x 0.6m	-	-
23	0.45m x 0.6m, 0.15m deep	General tree/plough damage. Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant small to medium stone, common medium quartz	22
24	0.7m x 0.85m, 0.2m deep	General tree/plough damage. Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant medium to large stone and common medium quartz	23
25	0.6m x 0.85m,	General tree/plough damage. Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, abundant	24

	0.2m deep	medium to large stone and common medium quartz	
26	0.55m x 0.6m, 0.2m deep	General tree/plough damage. Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, common medium to very large stone and occasional medium quartz	25
27	0.55m x 0.6m	-	-
28	0.45m x 0.55m	-	-
29	0.35m x 0.35m, 0.15m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, common small to medium stone	26
30	0.35m x 0.45m, 0.2m deep	Mid grey-brown clayey-silt, occasional very large stone	-
31	c.1.5m x c.2m, 0.2m deep	General area of disturbance. Topsoil visible, common very large stone and medium to large quartz	27
32	c.1.8m x c.3m, 0.2m deep	General area of root disturbance. Topsoil and mid grey-brown clayey- silt, abundant medium to large stone, common very large stone slabs	28



Photo 1: Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074), view looking north. 1m scale.



Photo 2: Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074), view looking southeast. 1m scale.



Photo 3: Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074), view looking east.



Photo 4: Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074), view looking southwest of the turf-filled summit depression. 1m scale.



Photo 5: View looking NNW from Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074).



Photo 6: View looking NE from Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074).



Photo 7: View looking ESE from Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074).



Photo 8: View looking SW from Crug y Bwdran round barrow (CM074).



Photo 9: Area 2, view east. 0.5m scale.



Photo 10: Area 3, view east. 0.5m scale.



Photo 11: Area 4, view east. 0.5m scale.



Photo 12: Area 5, view east. 0.5m scale.



Photo 13: Area 6, view east. 0.5m scale.



Photo 14: Area 7, view north. 0.5m scale.



Photo 15: Area 8, view north. 0.5m scale.



Photo 16: Area 10, view northeast. 0.5m scale.



Photo 17: Area 11, view north. 0.5m scale.



Photo 18: Area 13, view northwest. 0.5m scale.



Photo 19: Area 15, view west. 0.5m scale.



Photo 20: Area 16, view west. 0.5m scale.



Photo 21: Area 17, view northwest. 0.5m scale.



Photo 22: Area 23, view northwest. 0.5m scale.



Photo 23: Area 24, view northwest. 0.5m scale.



Photo 24: Area 25, view northwest. 0.5m scale.



Photo 25: Area 26, view southeast. 0.5m scale.



Photo 26: Area 29, view east. 0.5m scale.



Photo 27: Area 31, view northeast.



Photo 28: Area 32, view southeast. 0.5m scale.

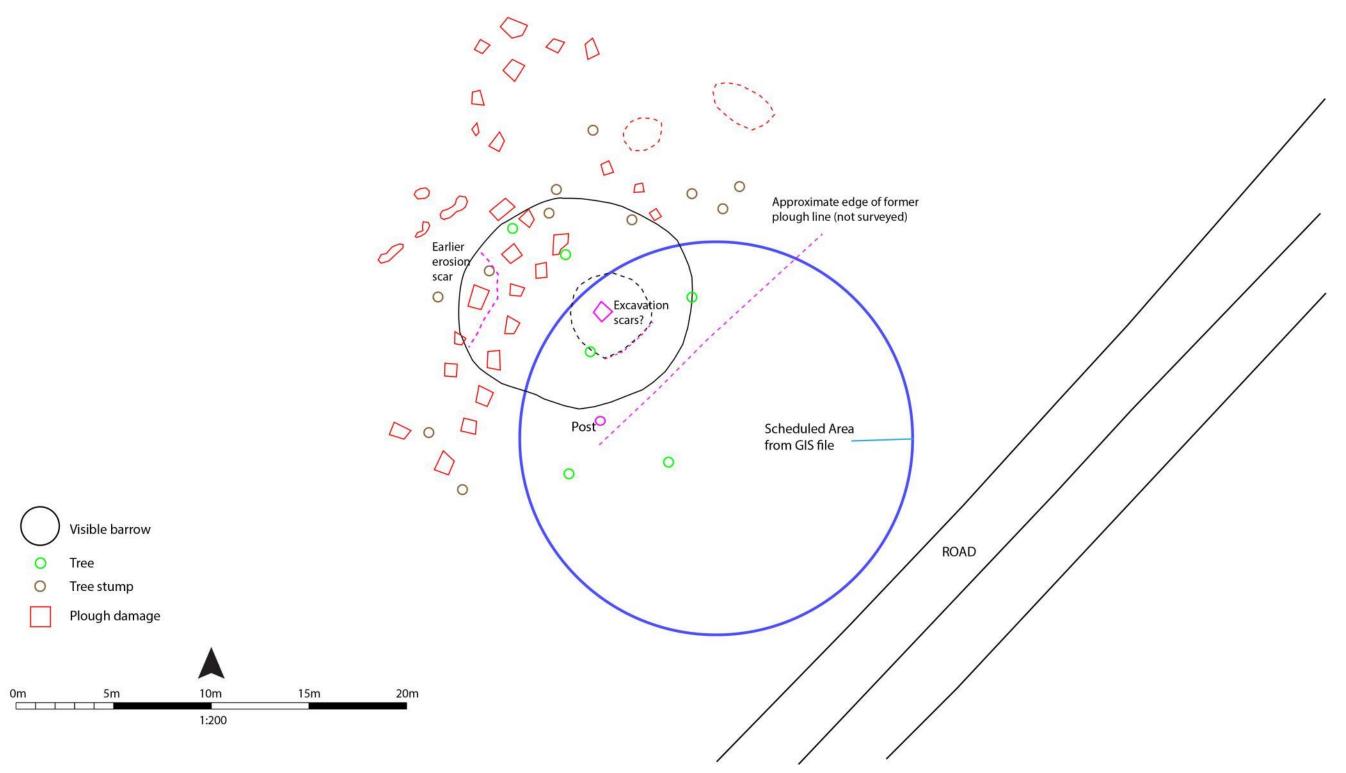


Figure 3: Survey plan of the barrow and recorded areas of damage. Overlaid with the boundary of the Scheduled Area as recorded on the GIS files downloadable from the Welsh Government's GeoPortal (Cof Cymru - https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru/downloads).

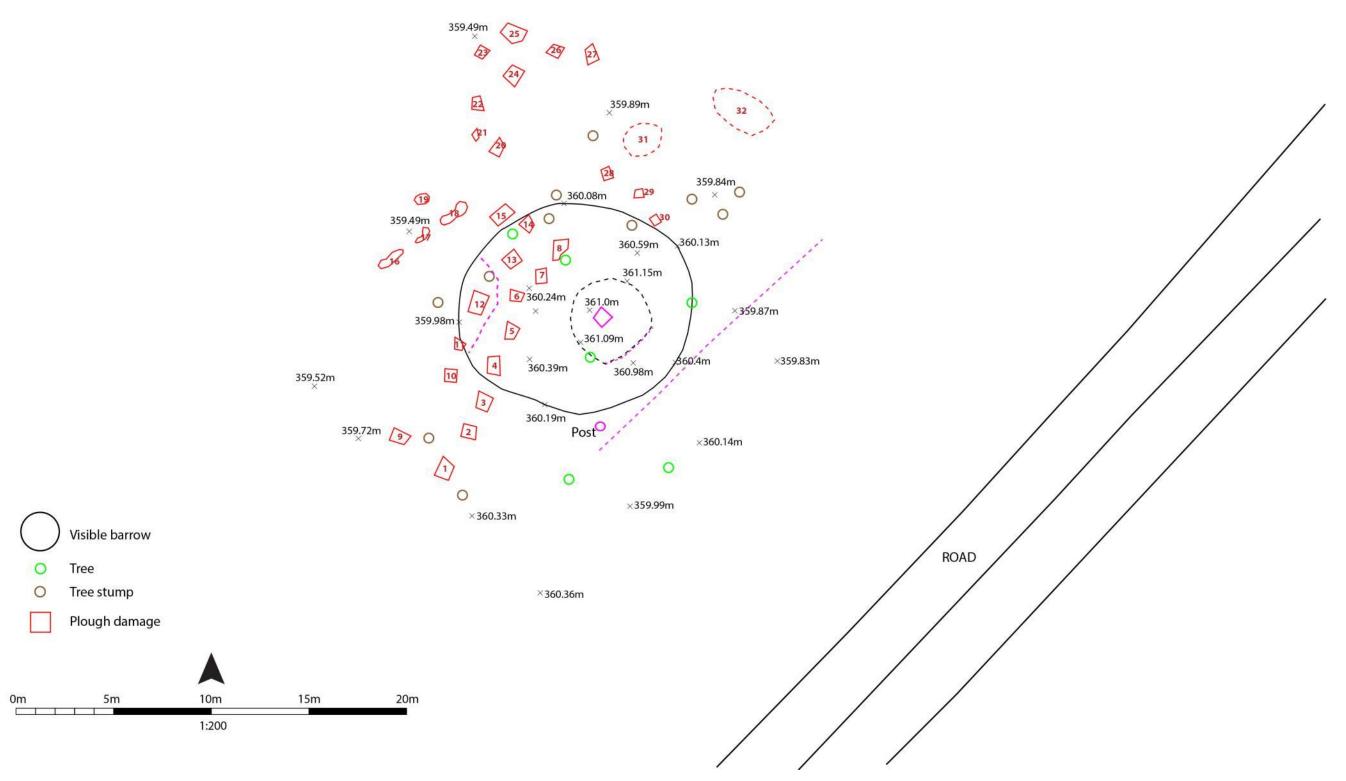


Figure 4: Surveyed plan with areas of damage labelled and levels given to metres above Ordnance Datum (mOD).

4. **CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned to carry out an archaeological survey of an area of damage on the remains of Crug y Bwdran round barrow, a Scheduled Monument CM074.
- 4.2 The round barrow is a Bronze Age funerary monument standing on a north to westerly facing slope near a local summit of high ground on the edge of Brechfa Forest. A series of small scoops had been cut into the surface of the barrow remains during forestry ploughing activity in 2021.
- 4.3 Several areas of damage had removed topsoil deposits and disturbed subsoil deposits on and around the barrow. These revealed a stony subsoil, which increased in the frequency and size of stones on and immediately surrounding the barrow, suggesting the stone may represent part of the barrow material. Included in this were noticeable quantities of quartz, the suggestion being that quartz was also used in the barrow material. No clear structural remains were identifiable within the small irregular areas of plough damage, and no further archaeological deposits or artefacts were visible. Concentrations of stony soil, including some large pieces of stone and flattish slabs, and concentrations of quartz, suggest further areas of possible barrow material in the surrounding area. These may have originated from Crug y Bwdran itself, through previous disturbance and spread, or previous archaeological investigation in 1924, or they may simply be disturbed naturally outcropping bedrock deposits. There is the possibility that these deposits may originate from buried remains of further barrows in the area, although no such features have been identified from aerial photographs or site surveys.
- 4.4 Many of the areas of damage are relatively shallow, and vegetation cover is returning. Where damage is deeper, the disturbed material lies adjacent to the scooped-out ground. As no identifiable structural elements were visible, the disturbed ground could be returned to their adjacent scoops and be allowed to regrow. When the Scheduled Area depicted on current GIS files was overlaid on the survey results (Figure 3) it is apparent that the Scheduled Area does not cover the extent of the actual barrow remains, which may help explain how the damage occurred. These boundaries should be adjusted, but it may be necessary to demarcate the barrow physically during any future works to avoid further intrusion.

5. SOURCES

- Cook, N, Hughes, G, Page, N & Ramsey, R, 2003. *Prehistoric Funerary & Ritual Sites Project: East Carmarthenshire 2002-2003*. Cambria Archaeology (Dyfed Archaeological Trust) Report 2002/94.
- Davey, 2002. Approaching the determinants of site location: a study of the prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments of the upper Tywi Vallley. Published MA project for the University of Birmingham.

Database

- Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF
- British Geological Survey information accessed via http://mapapps.bqs.ac.uk/qeologyofbritain/home.html

