

Archaeological Assessment

1: Planning History

The Trust responded in October 1992 to a pre-planning enquiry on the above scheme made by Lyn Powell esq., of Chapman Warren Consultants, acting for Mr and Mrs Terry Griffiths. It was pointed out that there were features of archaeological and historic landscape interest within the application area, in addition to a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Chapman Warren consultants were advised that, should a planning application be made for the scheme the Trust would advise the Local Planning Authority that an archaeological assessment be made prior to determination of consent as recommended by PPG 16 'Archaeology and Planning'.

This advice was not followed by Carmarthen District Council. However, their planning approval was subject to a condition that the developer be responsible for a suitable programme of archaeological evaluation, and prepare plans showing measures for the preservation of important archaeological features and scheduled ancient monuments on the site.

2: The Assessment Brief

Dyfed Archaeological Trust were commissioned by the applicants to carry out an assessment to a brief defined by Chapman Warren:

(i) The assessment should take the form of a "desk top" study which fully considers all available archival material relevant to the site.

(ii) The study should also, if necessary, be supported by a field visit to ascertain features of interest clearly visible on site.

(iii) The overall assessment should produce a report that identifies known features of archaeological interest, pinpoints their locations, and provides advice on their protection as part of the golf course development.

3: Summary of Archaeological work carried out and sources consulted.

A search was made of Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record, defined as the County Archaeological Record in PPG 16. A telephone consultation took place with Cadw's Inspector of Ancient Monuments and officers within the Ancient Monuments Administration Section to check whether Scheduled Monument Consent was required for the scheme and discuss appropriate management recommendations in the vicinity of Meini Llwydion Chambered Tomb (Monument No: Carm. 57).

Visits were made to the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth and the Carmarthen Record Office to examine the surveyors drawings (2 inch to the mile) preparatory to the first edition One inch OS map of 1843, the first and second editions of the OS 1:2500 maps of 1887 and 1906. No 18th century Estate Maps were found and the Tithe Map for Llangain Parish of 1844 does not contain details of field names and boundaries. The Trust's

collection of air photographs was examined - the oblique shots taken for Cadw of Meini Llwydion and its environs in 1990, also the Meridian verticals of 1955.

A Field Visit was made on 15th April. By this date the area of the new car park had been excavated, part of the spoil placed on the site for landscaping the course and the greens and fairways marked out. The whole area was walked over and examined.

4: Archaeological sites and historic landscape features

4.1 Meini Llwydion Burial Chamber, DAT site no 2146.

Three upright stones remain of this burial chamber within a slight hollow in middle of a sloping field. All the stones lean away from the vertical but are thought to be in their original positions. Either one large or multiple capstones would be necessary to cover the burial chamber, but no trace remains, nor are there any surface indications of the much larger mound which would originally have covered the monument. No excavations have ever been carried out and it is unlikely that any of the original ground level let alone the tomb contents remain within the stone setting. But by analogy with sites elsewhere in west Wales we can suggest that the monument is between 3½ and 4 thousand years old and thus dates to the neolithic or new stone age period.

It is the best preserved of a group of similar monuments in the Llangain/Llanstephan area. When last visited by an Inspector of Ancient monuments it was noted that an area 7 x 5 m. was left unploughed around the stones. The extent of the scheduled area is shown on the attached Map (Map 1).

Recommendation: The scheduled area around the stone must be respected and no ground disturbance take place. The edge of the fairway, as marked out, is rather too close to the monument and should be shifted westwards by about 2 metres. The monument can then remain safely within the 'rough' but be visible and accessible for interested visitors.

4.2 Potential prehistoric and early historic sites.

The Llanstephan 'peninsula' contains a significant number of standing stone and possible burial chamber sites. In addition a large number of Iron Age enclosures, ranging in size from hillforts down to simple defended farmsteads are known. (See enclosed Map 2). Regular aerial reconnaissance continues to discover new sites surviving only as 'cropmarks' detectable only in certain crop and/or drought conditions. For example, a small circular enclosure was discovered in 1990 just outside the application area near to Beili Syfi.

Recommendation: In view of the archaeological potential of the area the Trust would recommend that a minimum of large scale landscaping and alteration of the existing landform take place; this recommendation is strengthened by 4.3 below.

4.3 The existing field pattern.

The size and shape of the existing fields together with their hedged boundaries, are relict features which contain the evidence for the way the land was used and farmed in the Middle Ages, and probably the 16th, 17th and even early 18th centuries. The present day B4312 Carmarthen to Llansteffan road which forms the northern and western boundary of the application area is relatively new. It was constructed in the late 18th or early 19th

century and can be seen to cut across earlier field patterns and their associated roads and trackways between the scattered farmsteads of Llangain parish. The present day hedged fields are evidently the product of enclosing former strips or groups of strips within what were large 'open' fields communally cultivated. The strips themselves tended to be laid out along or across the contours in a regular fashion because they were the product of ploughing with a far less manouvrable plough than today's version and the need to manage and turn a plough team perhaps of 6 to 8 beasts - oxen in the middle ages, gradually being replaced by horses. The characteristic curving shape to these hedge lines is thought to reflect the gradual turn needed as the plough team approached the 'headland' bounding groups of strips, turned around and ploughed back down the next furrow. Headlands were often used as trackways between farms or hamlets - some survive only as long continuous hedgelines, others as footpaths and others as minor roads. These points are illustrated in the accompanying annotated map and air photograph. (Map 3). A sample hedgerow species count was carried out on a number of hedges within the application area, using the techniques of dating by average number of species. The results suggest that the present day fields were created from groups of strips brought into individual ownership and enclosed as late as the early to mid 18th century.

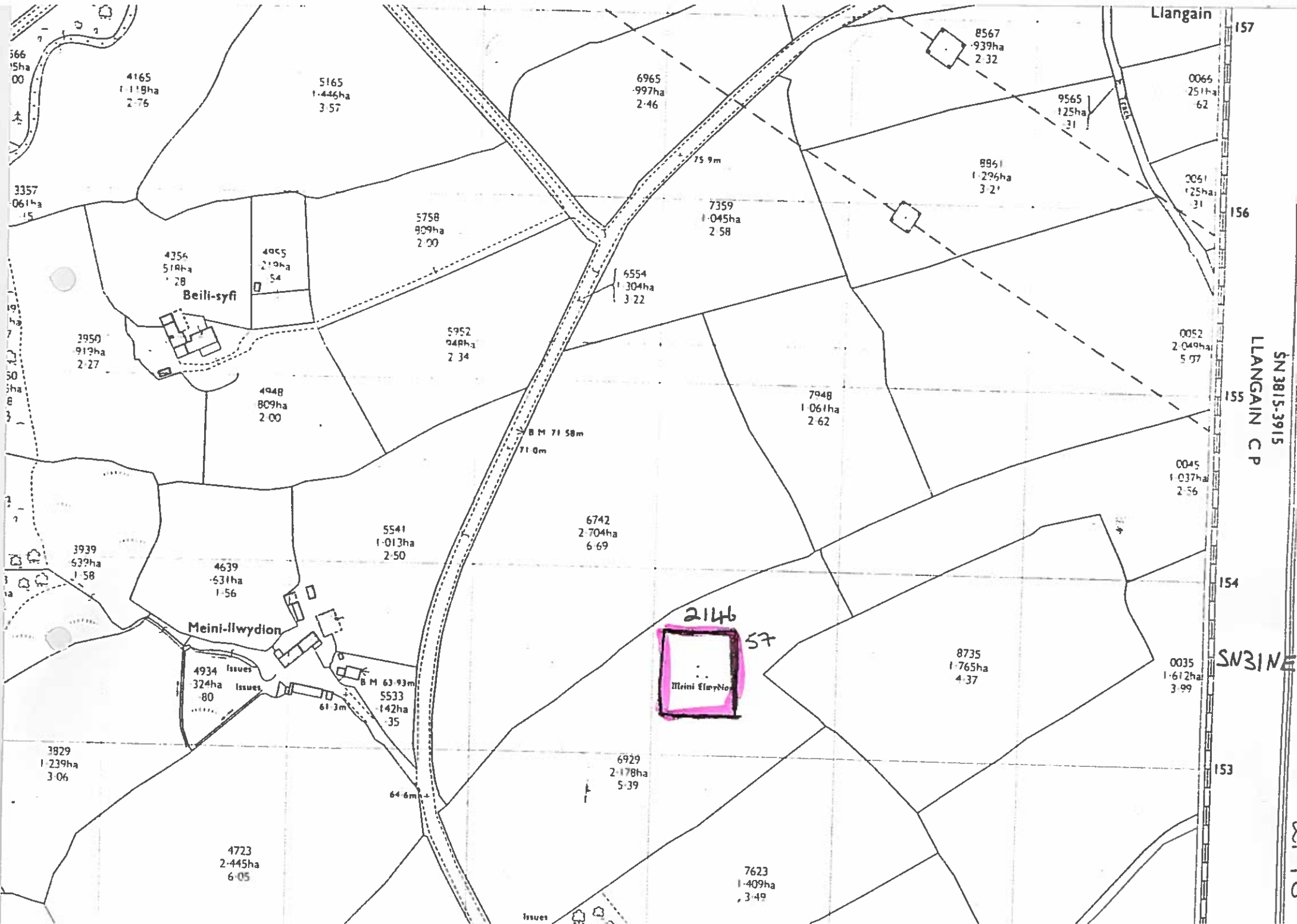
Recommendation: The existing field boundaries within the application area be retained and the golf course be laid out within them, because of their interest and value as historic landscape components.

4.4 Settlements.

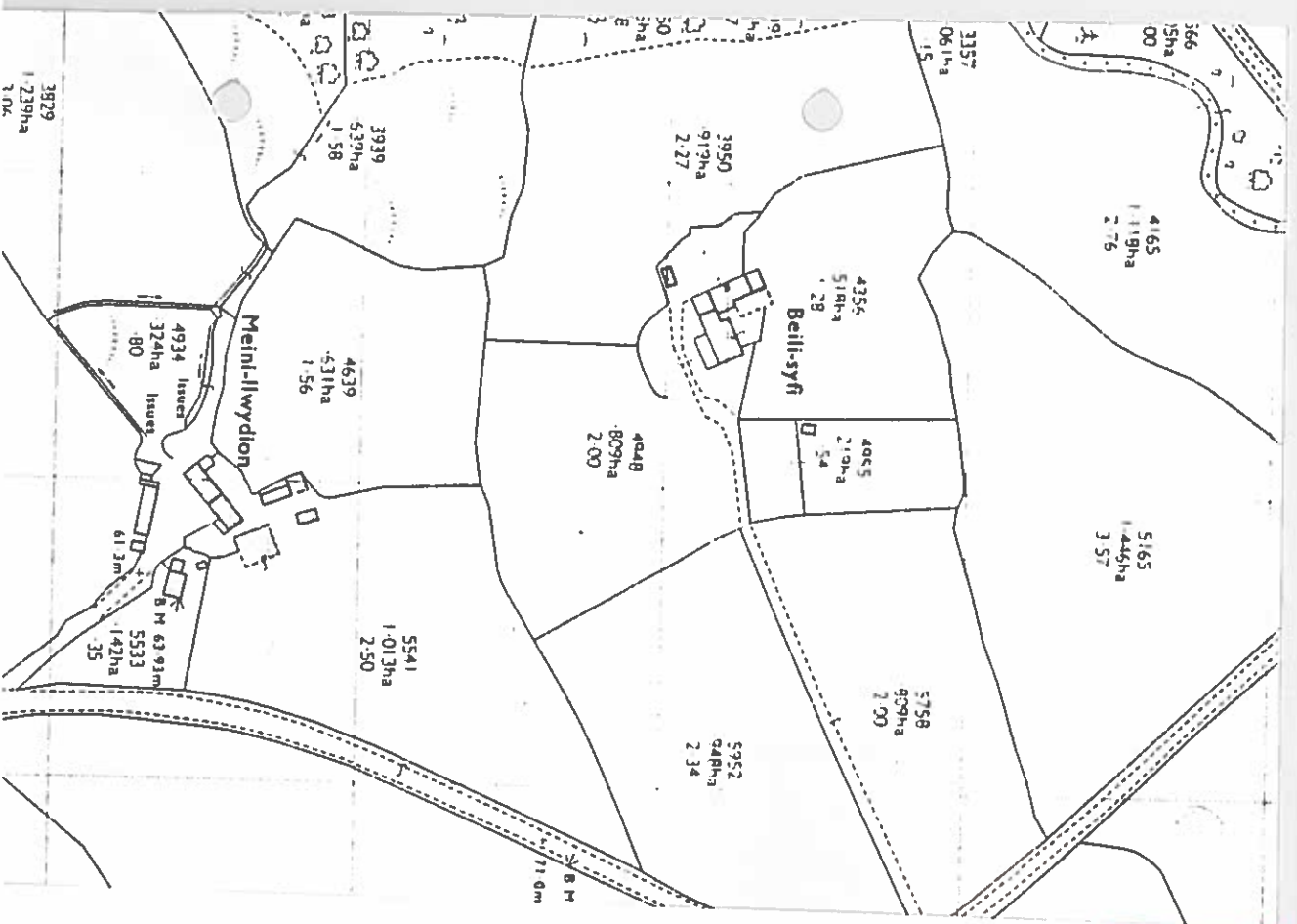
The medieval parish of Llangain was in origin a 'maenor', a pre-Norman native welsh territorial and administrative unit of Dark Age origins. In the middle ages the parish was part of the Lordship of Llansteffan. Like many in south Wales this lordship was divided into an 'Englishry' and a 'Welshry'. The boundary between the two was the Fernhill brook due west of the application area, still the parish boundary. Welsh law, welsh kinship and inheritance systems and methods of land holding survived in the Welshries, all characteristically resulting in a pattern of dispersed settlements that has lasted into our own century. The nucleated village was very much the product of Anglo-Norman settlement in the Englishries.

But within the dispersed settlement pattern of isolated farms and small hamlets of the Welshries there were some of local administrative significance. It is thought possible that those with the 'beili' place-name element, as in Beili Syfi (or Seivi in the Tithe schedule of 1844) might have been the holdings of the reeve or beadle or bailiff of the Welshry. On the Tithe Map another holding 'Bailey bach' is marked located within the application area, (Map 4). This has now vanished and there are only very slight surface traces of its site. The fact that it is called 'bach' however suggests that it was only a cottage and not the original 'beili' settlement.

Recommendation: That the site of 'Bailey bach' remain undisturbed by any ground works necessary to create a tee, or green or rough for the golf course.



MAP 1: Extent of Scheduled Area
 DFT no 2146 SMN Carn 57.



DEFENDED SETTLEMENTS S.W. OF CARMARTHEN

Neolithic + Bronze Age sites = ■
(CONTOURS IN METRES)

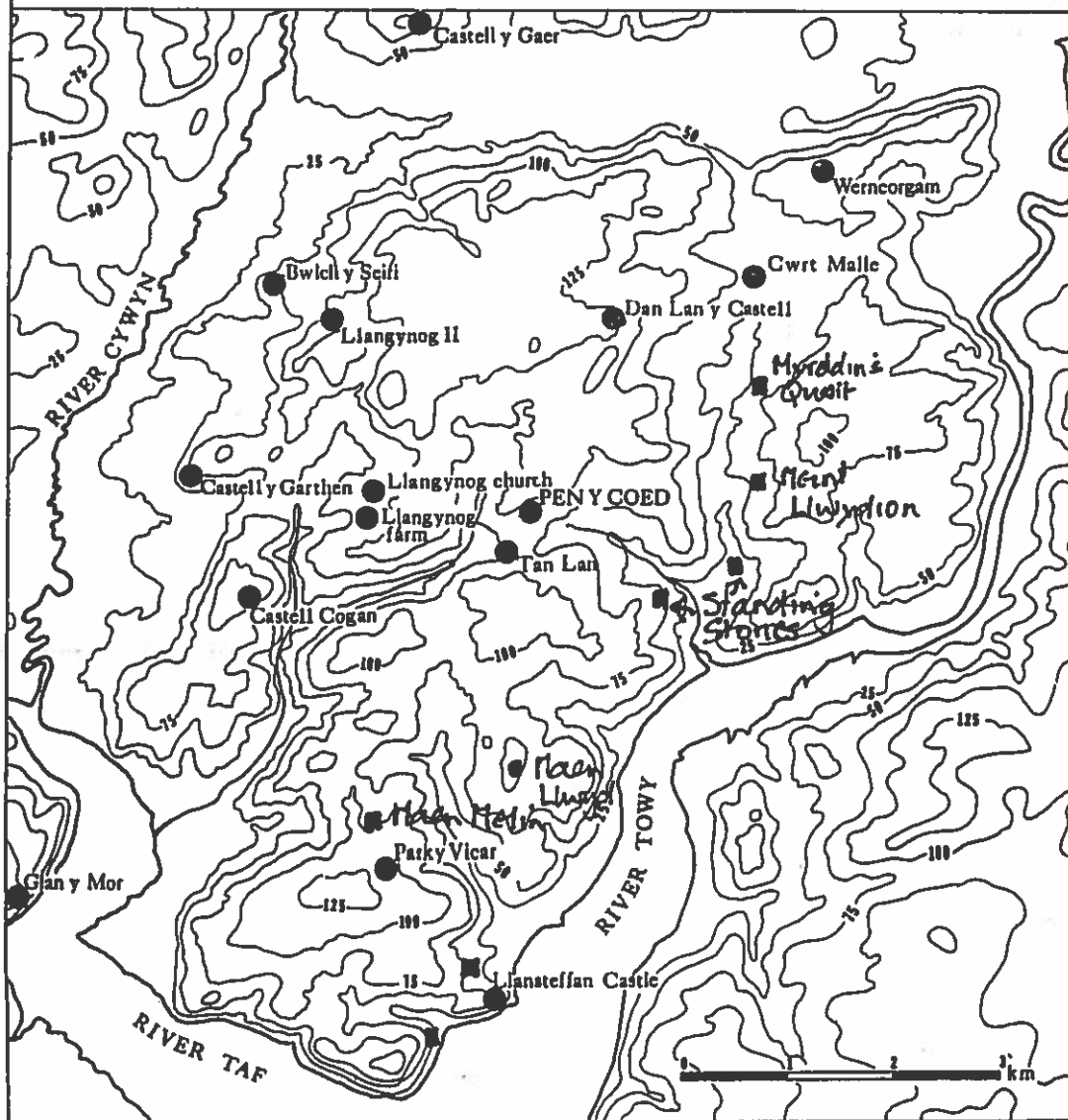
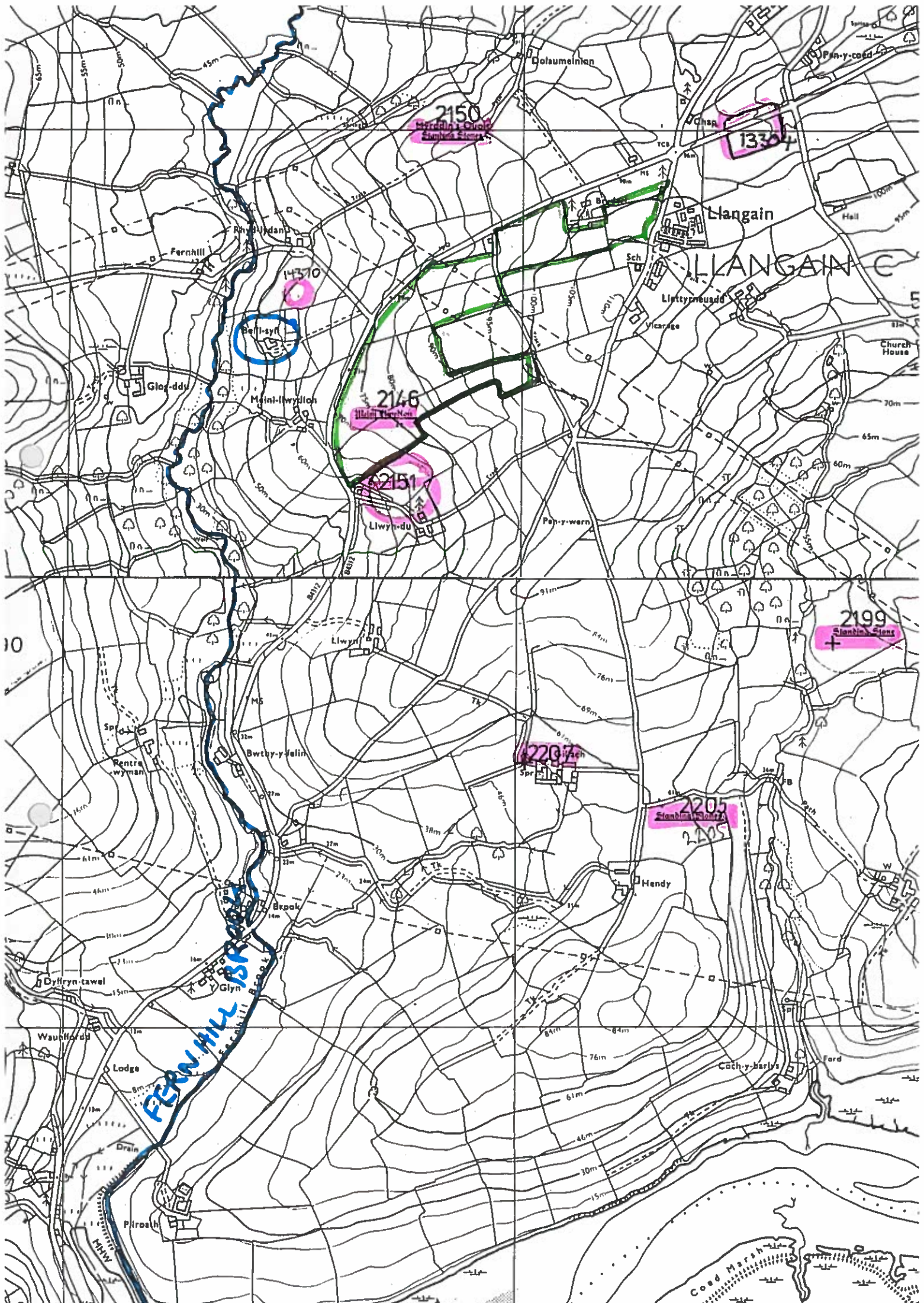
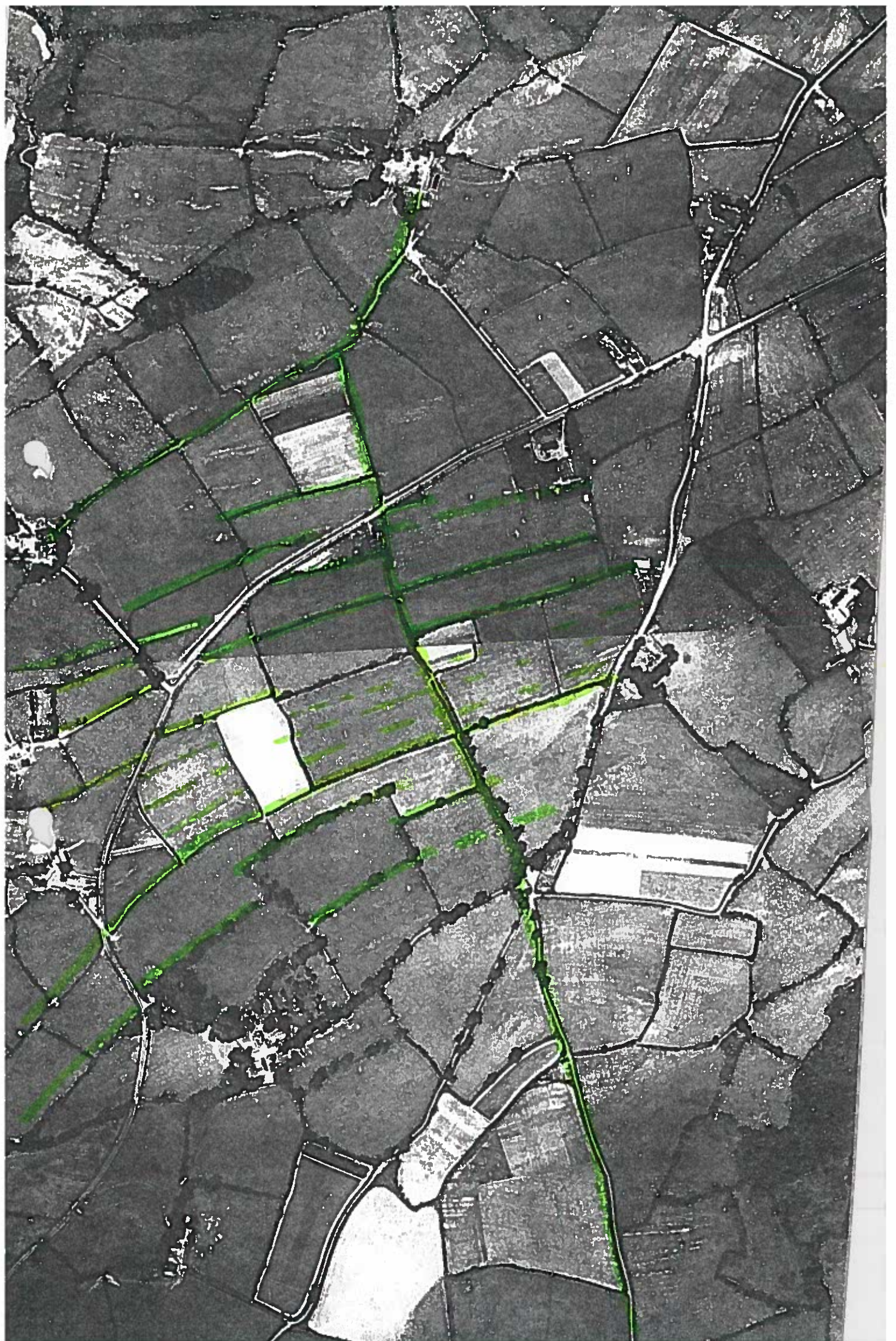
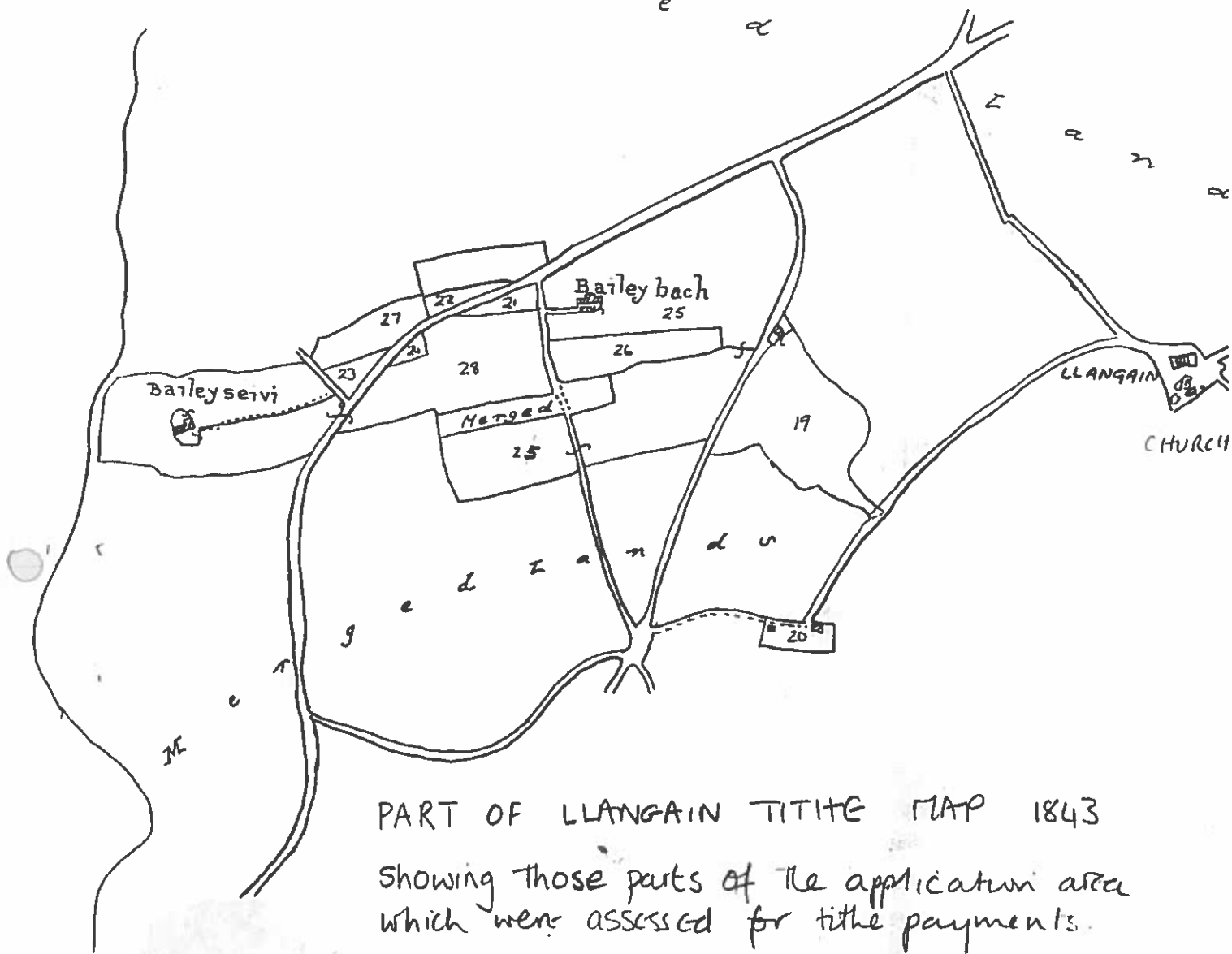


FIGURE 1. Location of Pen-y-coed enclosure.

MAP 2: Main Prehistoric Sites in
Llansteffan, Llangaini + Llangynog







PART OF LLANGAIN TITHE MAP 1843
 Showing those parts of the application area
 which were assessed for tithe payments.

$$l = 2500$$
