

**ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY
FIELD OPERATIONS**

**ORANGE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
INSTALLATION**

at
**PELLORWELL, TANYGROES,
CARDIGAN**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF**

SEPTEMBER 1997

Project Record Number 32488

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for

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SUMMARY

The installation of telecommunication equipment was undertaken at Davies Farm Supplies, Pellorwell, Tanygroes. Orange commissioned Bucknall Austin to carry out the construction work during August 1997. An archaeological watching brief was required as the proposed site was located within the interior of Gaer Pwntan, an iron age hillfort.

The construction work programme included excavation of two box trenches for the mast and cabin, a shallow trench for the earth cable and topsoil stripping for the access road. An infilled ditch was identified throughout all four areas of excavation, and a possible post hole was observed. No finds were obtained from the infilled ditch but it is thought to be associated with the iron age hillfort.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was undertaken by B. Allen, K. Murphy, and M. Trethowan. The report was prepared by B. Allen, Project Officer, Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology Field Operations.

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT COMMISSION

Orange commissioned Bucknall Austin to undertake the engineering work and Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology to carry out the archaeological watching brief.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

The project has been undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists watching brief specifications. The watching brief aimed to monitor all exposed sections, record any archaeological features uncovered during excavation and to produce a report.

ABBREVIATIONS

Sites recorded within the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the open-ended numbering system employed by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations (eg.001; 010; 100; 1000). The project archive is indexed and catalogued according to the National Monument Record (NMR) guidelines.

SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

THE SITE

The telecommunications installation is at Gaer Pwntan, situated 0.6km west of Tan-y-groes, Ceredigion, NGR SN 2923 4934. The site lies within the agricultural land of Davies Farm Supplies at approximately 220m OD.

Gaer Pwntan (PRN 5221), is a bivallate Iron Age hillfort with two widely spaced ramparts. The inner rampart can only be traced on the southern side. Elsewhere, inner defences have been obscured by nineteenth century quarrying and ploughing. The outer rampart survives to a much greater extent. The telecommunication installation is located along the inner edge of the east section of the outer defences.

There are numerous, small, disused nineteenth century quarries in the area. The most extensive is Pwntan Quarry (PRN 15486), located within the centre of the hillfort. These quarries extracted Ordovician Llangrannog sandstone of the Ashgill series, for local building material.

The site has also been subject to long-term agricultural activity, including ploughing and removal of hedges, and more recently to development on both the eastern and western limits of the hillfort.

METHODOLOGY

Preliminary documentary research was undertaken using the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record to obtain information on the historical background of the area. Once informed of work in progress, successive site visits were made and all exposed features were rapidly recorded so as not to delay the engineering work. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using an open-ended numbering system, and where appropriate drawn in plan and section. Photographs and site notes were taken throughout the fieldwork.

FIELDWORK RESULTS

The site sloped gently to the west; this was reflected by the increasing depth of topsoil (001) down slope to a maximum depth of 0.10m. The basal deposits of area A had already been masked by a skim of concrete on the initial site visit. However, it was possible to identify on the western side an infilled ditch exposed in the north and south facing sections. The ditch continued into the east facing section, hence exposing truncated ditch fills along its length. During excavation of this trench the contractors had noted during excavation of this trench a high concentration of stone varying in size up to approximately 1.50m, extracted from the western side of the trench. Because of the paucity of stone observed within the surrounding natural matrix (002 & 003) it appears that these stones were derived from the ditch fills. This is further supported by the stonier nature of the basal ditch fill (008), seen in section within Area A. The ditch was

U-shaped, comprising various discrete fills (005-008). The maximum width of the ditch was 2.00m and the maximum depth 0.50m, but the full ditch profile was not observed throughout the excavations. It was possible to trace this ditch for approximately 20m, in areas A, B, C and D. The ditch followed the same alignment throughout, where it was exposed. However, most of the access road had been backfilled prior to the initial site visit and the alignment of the ditch here is unknown.

In area C a circular feature was identified, 0.25m in diameter; this was not investigated further because the maximum depth of excavation was reached at this point.

No other features were identified in any of the excavated areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief proved highly informative, enhancing our understanding of Pwntan hillfort. Although this hilltop enclosure has been subject to extensive quarrying during the nineteenth century there has not been any monitored excavation work undertaken to date. Therefore the watching brief highlighted features potentially associated with the hillfort, and indicated their level of preservation.

Although Pwntan Quarry was extensive and in close proximity to the telecommunications site there was no evidence of disturbance or waste tipping within the excavated areas.

No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief excavations, therefore the date of the ditch identified remains uncertain. The ditch followed the exact alignment to the outer rampart along the 20m exposed up to the point of backfill on the access road. The ditch is likely to have been truncated by ploughing, hence its smaller dimensions compared to those normally associated with hillfort defences. It is possible that the ditch may represent further defences between the town known ramparts, although more work would have to be carried out to confirm this. The stones noted in the ditch fill may be remains of a collapsed revetment to the rampart.

The circular feature at the base of Area C may be a posthole; however, this was not investigated further because the limit of excavation had been reached.

APPENDIX ONE: SITE RECORDS

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

001 = Layer, topsoil, very silty sandy loam, mid grey, angular stones 10%, maximum depth 0.10m

002 = Layer, natural, sandy silty clay, moderately compact, mid yellow/brown, sub angular stones 40%, maximum depth 0.70m.

003 = Layer, natural, very sandy silty clay, compact, light grey, angular gravel/grit 70%, sub-angular stone 10%, depth 0.30m not based.

004 = Cut, ditch, gently sloping, approximately 45 degrees, U-shaped, identified in section, depth 0.60m not based.

005 = Fill of 004, sandy silt, friable, dark black brown, sub angular stone 10%, maximum depth 0.13m.

006 = Fill of 004, sandy loam, friable, mid yellow brown, grit 40% and sub angular stone 10%, maximum depth 0.20m.

007 = Fill of 004, sandy silt, friable, dark grey brown, rounded gravel 10%, maximum depth 0.15m.

008 = Fill of 004, sandy clay, moderately compact, dark brown, sub angular stone 40%, maximum depth 0.40m.

009 = Cut?, post hole?, sub circular, diameter 0.25m, identified in plan not excavated.

010 = Fill? of 009, silty clay loam, friable, mid yellow brown, sub angular stone 10%, depth unknown unexcavated.

APPENDIX TWO: CATALOGUE OF WATCHING BRIEF ARCHIVE

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of final report.
- B.** Site records, including context record sheets and site notebook.
- C.** Site photographs (monochrome and colour slide, 35mm)
- I.** Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories **D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L** and **N**.

The archive is currently held by Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Dyfed under project number 32488

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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