

ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
FIELD OPERATIONS

**THE BOX, ADPAR  
NEWCASTLE EMLYN  
CEREDIGION**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

DAT Primary Record Number 35706

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## **SUMMARY**

Following heavy and continuous rain in November 1997 a large hole appeared in the rear garden of The Box, Adpar, Newcastle Emlyn, Ceredigion. Investigation by the tenants of the property revealed an earth-cut chamber capped with flat 'lintel-like' stones and entered via a low, narrow stone-lined passage. The chamber sloped down from west to east to a depth of *c.* 1m. A fragment of bone from the chamber had been taken for identification; the results of this identification are still awaited.

A small-scale recording project was carried out to provide a record of the site prior to it being made safe. There was no evidence to provide a date or suggest a function for the structure.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The project was carried out by Nigel Page and Susan Scott of Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology Field Operations. The project was funded by Cadw. Thanks go to Mr and Mrs Parr for notifying CAMBRIA about the site and for their interest and help

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PROJECT PROPOSALS AND COMMISSION**

During a spell of continuous heavy rain in November 1997 a large hole appeared in the rear garden of a property called The Box in Adpar, Newcastle Emlyn, Ceredigion. Inspection by the tenants revealed several narrow, flat 'lintel-like' stones capping a subterranean, earth-cut chamber. Some small-scale private excavations took place revealing more of the structure and following this a request was made to Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology for advice. A site visit was made to inspect the site and to advise on possible courses of action regarding further excavations and making the site safe. A subsequent visit was made by Mr. D Benson (CAMBRIA) and Mr R Turner (Cadw) to assess the potential of the site and the level of any archaeological works required to record the structure.

A small-scale programme of recording was agreed and CAMBRIA were commissioned to carry out the project.

### **1.2 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

The main objectives of the project will be to try to determine the extent of the structure and any other associated features there may be, to characterise, if possible, the structure by dating and type and to provide enough information to allow decisions on the protection and future management of the site.

### **1.3 REPORT OUTLINE**

This report describes the physical environment of the site (Section 2) before summarising the results of the fieldwork (Section 3) and the conclusions (Section 4) based on the results of Sections 2 and 3.

### **1.4 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT**

Sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) will be identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Any new sites will be allocated a PRN and identified by their NGR.

All archaeological features and contexts will be referred to using the three-figure numbering system (e.g.) employed by Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology Field Operations.

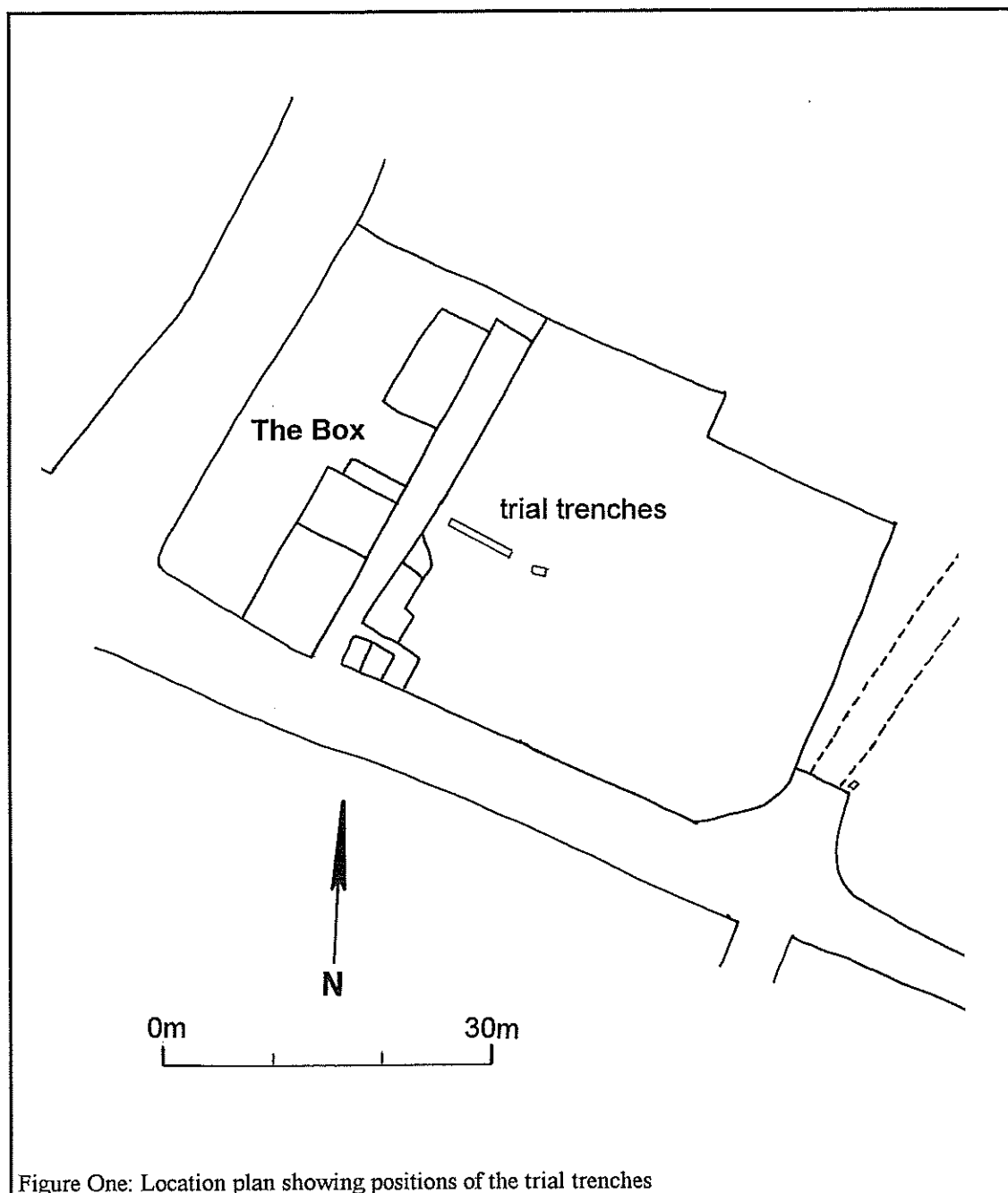
## 2. THE SITE

### 2.1 LOCATION

The site lies in the rear garden of a property called The Box in Adpar, Newcastle Emlyn, Ceredigion (NGR SN 3095 4100). It is situated on a south-facing hillside overlooking the Teifi Valley and the town of Newcastle Emlyn.

### 2.2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

A fairly thin (20-30cm) covering of turf and topsoil overlies the gravelly clay beds of the Ordovician Series. The garden has been landscaped in the past, which has altered the original topography of the slope.



### 3. SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS

#### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

Private investigation of the site had resulted in the opening of two trenches, the main trench and a second smaller trench to the east. The fieldwork comprised the recording of the exposed structure in the main trench and limited investigation to see if the structure continued in the second trench. Work on the structure (PRN 35706) itself was confined to recording the exposed sections. The site was recorded by scale drawing and photography. Written descriptions were made of the main structure and the stratigraphy where revealed. Only a limited amount of investigation was carried out in the second trench.

#### 3.2 FIELDWORK RESULTS

##### 3.2.1 The structure (Fig. 2)

As revealed, the structure consisted of an east-west stone-capped chamber entered from its west end via a small, low stone-lined passage. The overall dimensions of the structure were 6m x 1m; the passage was 1.3m x 0.4m and the chamber 4.7m x 1m. The floor of the chamber sloped down at approximately 30 degrees from west to east to a depth of c. 1m. It is accepted that the terms 'passage' and 'chamber' are subjective and may not truly reflect the nature of the structure, but they are used here for convenience.

The passage was constructed from faced stones; this stone facing survived to 8 courses high on its southern side and 7 courses high on its northern side. It may have originally been capped, but it was disturbed during the 19th century when a retaining wall was constructed around the back of the house. The passage appeared to have been filled with rubble during construction of the retaining wall.



Plate 1: stone-lined entrance looking southwest. *Photo, S Scott.*

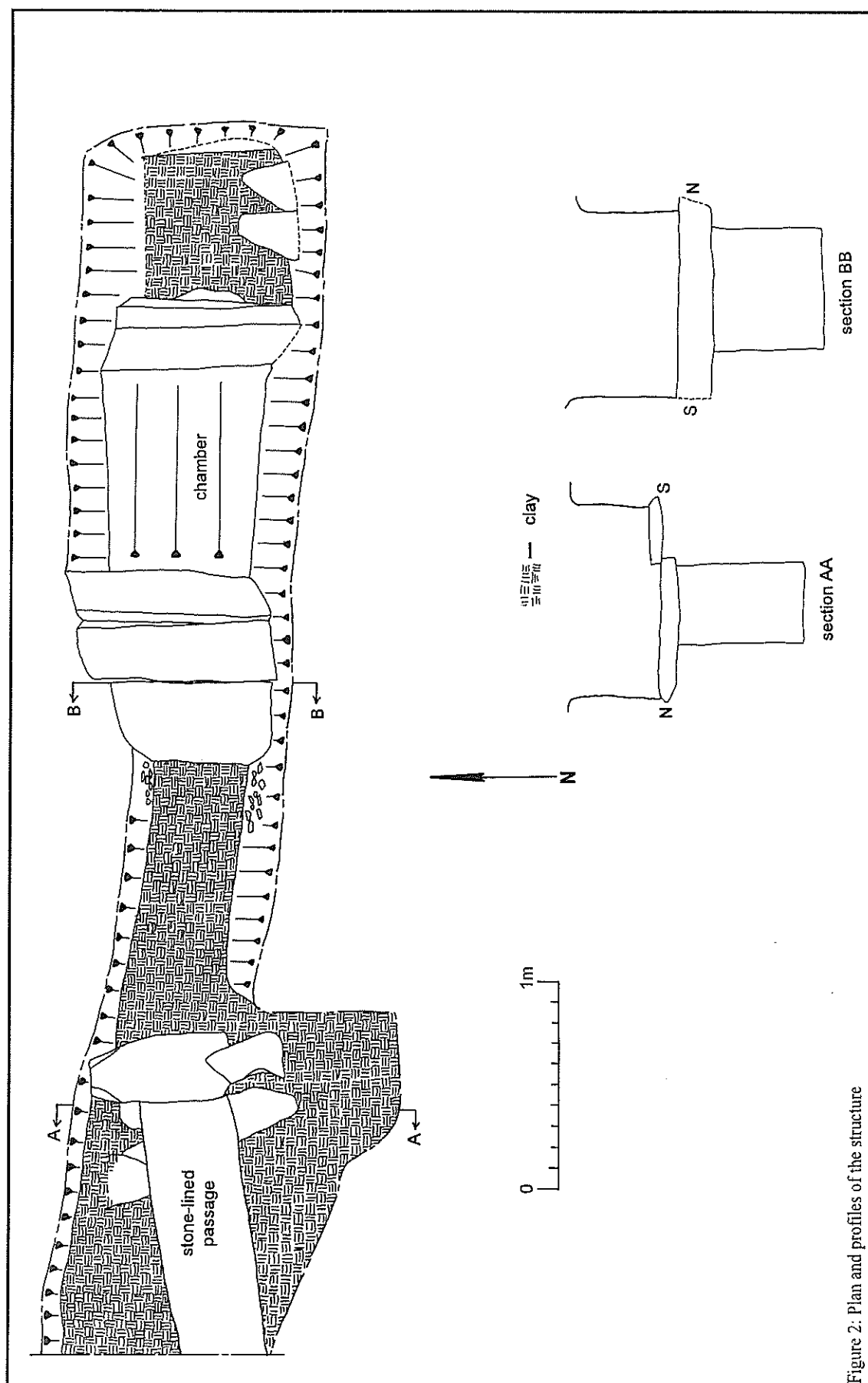
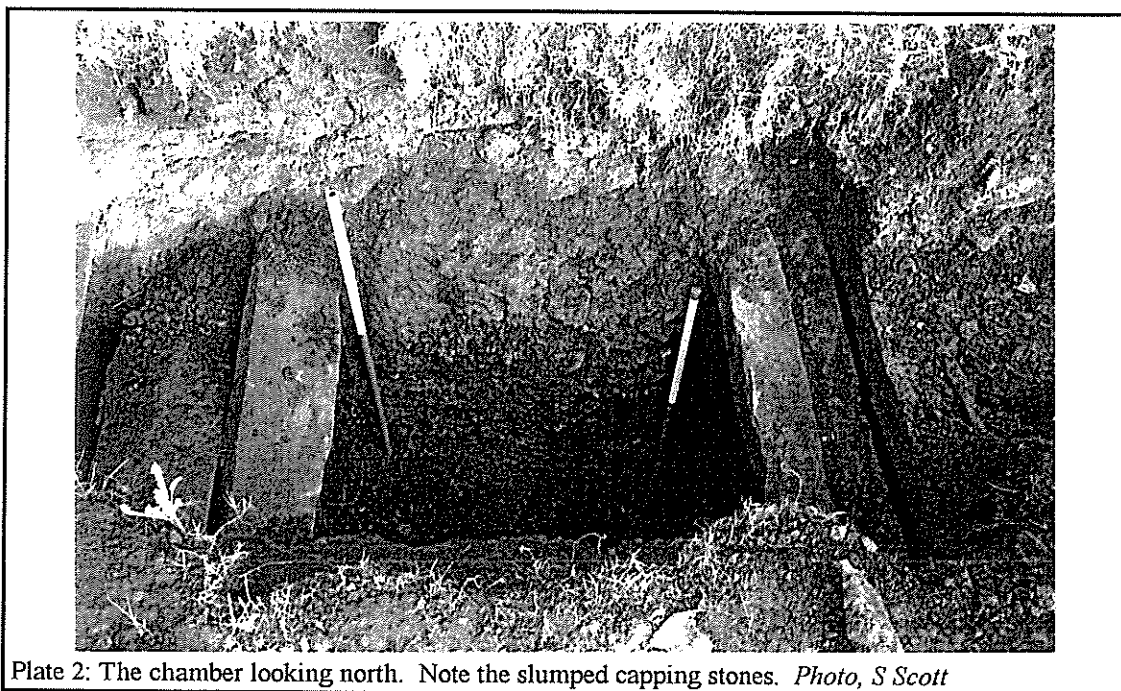


Figure 2: Plan and profiles of the structure

The chamber was earth-cut, with the capping stones supported on ledges along either side. It had a slightly concave eastern end. Apparently the only find from the chamber was a fragment of possibly human bone - on-site identification by Prof. D Austin - which has now been sent for positive identification (Mrs. Parr, tenant, *pers. Comm.*).

Overlying the capping stones was a 10-15cm thick layer of stony orange clay, which was in turn overlain by the topsoil. A small spread of slate was located between the clay and topsoil roughly halfway along the structure.



### 3.2.2 The second trench

A second trench opened to the east of the structure revealed a number of flat stones similar to the capping stones. However, the removal of some of the stones, prior to this fieldwork, showed that they were different to the capping stones in that they were thinner and would, therefore, not have supported as much weight as those used in the structure. Limited observation beneath the stones did not reveal evidence of any archaeological features.



## 4. CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The survey did not answer any questions regarding the date or function of the structure. However, the records from the survey may allow a re-interpretation in the future. There was no clear indication that the structure continued east across the garden.

### 4.2 POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS OF THE STRUCTURE

For any interpretation of a function of the structure it would be necessary to determine its age, but at present the only evidence is that it pre-dates the ?19th century retaining wall at the rear of the house. There was no positive evidence to suggest a function for the structure, although, a reasonable guess would be some kind of water course associated with the medieval or post-medieval predecessor of Cilgwyn Mansion (Mr. R Turner *in litt.*). Perhaps further study of the documentary and cartographic sources may help in identifying the structure and its use.

Other possible interpretations could include a small burial chamber, cellarage, some form of cistern. The structure has elements or aspects to it that would fit with any of these interpretations.



Plate 3: The chamber looking east. *Photo, S Scott.*

## **APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF EVALUATION 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.** Records made during fieldwork, including context record sheets and site notebook.
- C.** Drawing catalogue and site drawings.
- D.** Site photographs - catalogue, colour slides, B/W contact sheets.
- E.** Finds catalogue, individual finds records and finds report.
- I.** Archive report, draft copies of final report.
- J.** Publication drawings.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material for classes **F, G, H, K, L** and **N**.

The archive is currently held by Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 35705.