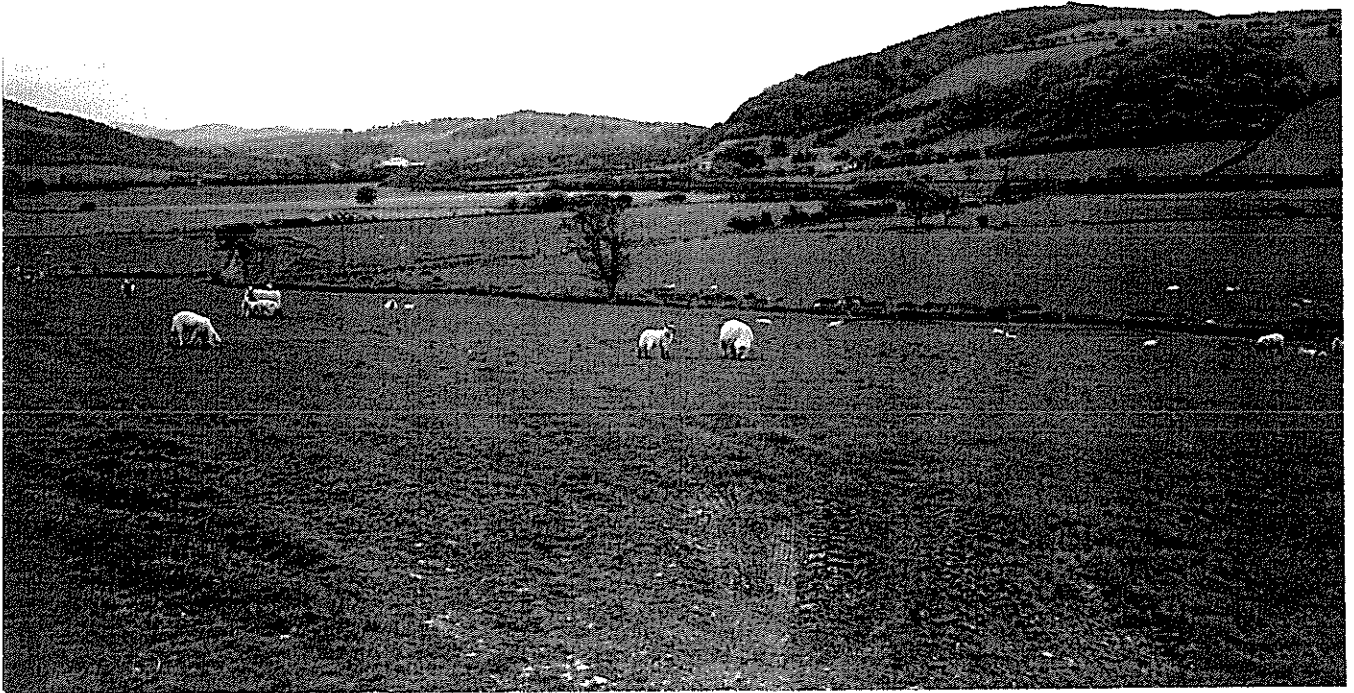


**ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
FIELD OPERATIONS**

**BOW STREET - LLANGORWEN  
CEREDIGION**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**

**MAY 1998**



*Report by*  
**Nigel Page BA AIFA**

*Prepared for*  
**Chapman Warren, Cardiff**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL**  
**BOW STREET - LLANGORWEN**  
**CEREDIGION**

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## **SUMMARY**

This archaeological appraisal of a proposed development site in the Clarach Valley between Bow Street and Llangorwen, Ceredigion, was intended to provide a rapid review of the known archaeological resource of the area and to identify any potential archaeological problems should the proposals proceed.

The appraisal has shown that the assessment area lies within a landscape settled and farmed since the prehistoric period. The present landscape had been established by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, elements being much earlier. There are only three known archaeological sites within the assessment boundaries, although there is enormous potential for further significant discoveries in the fluvial deposits that cover the valley bottom.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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

As part of a feasibility study into the possibility of industrial development on land between Bow Street and Llangorwen, Ceredigion, Chapman Warren commissioned Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology to undertake a rapid archaeological appraisal of the site.

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

The project was designed to review the known archaeological interests and to identify areas requiring further research.

### **1.3 REPORT OUTLINE**

This report describes the physical environment of the study area (Section 2) before summarising the archaeological resource (Section 3) and the likely impact of the proposed scheme on that resource (Section 4). Recommendations based on the results of Sections 3 and 4 are given in Section 5.

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

All sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record will be identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Any new sites will be assigned a PRN and located by their NGR. References to primary cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets, full details will be found in the bibliography.

## **2. THE STUDY AREA**

The proposed development site lies between Bow Street and Llangorwen in the Clarach Valley, Ceredigion. The site occupies the valley bottom and lies generally at c.30m OD. Two small rivers, the Afon Clarach and one of its tributaries, the Bowstreet Brook, run through the site and together they have laid considerable fluvial deposits across the site. The area is currently farmed and consists of both pasture and arable land.

### **3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE**

#### **3.1 THE PRESENT LANDSCAPE**

The Clarach valley appears to have been settled and a focus for agriculture from the prehistoric period, with the present landscape established by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although there are few known sites inside the assessment area it lies within an important archaeological landscape, with enormous potential for further significant discoveries.

#### **3.2 PREHISTORIC**

##### **3.2.1 Neolithic**

The number of prehistoric sites and finds from the region clearly indicates that a settled, agricultural economy was operating in the later prehistoric period. Finds (PRN 9994) of carbonised seeds and other plant remains dating from the Neolithic period recovered from Plas Gogerddan (Caseldine 1992) indicate that agriculture has been practiced in the area for at least 4,000 years.

##### **3.2.2 Bronze Age**

Many of the Bronze Age features are associated with ritual (PRNs 8237 and 5405) or burial (for example PRNs 8295, 8296, 6182 and 2016), although there is a possible settlement site (PRN 8319) to the south of the assessment area. A cremation burial (PRN 8295 and 8296) was apparently recovered in 1841 during the excavation of the foundation trench for the eastern nave gable of All Saints Church, Llangorwen. Others were found during the digging of graves within the churchyard (Briggs 1994, 245 - No.198; Ludlow 1994, 5; Ludlow and Williams 1995, 6). This suggests that the present church was constructed on the site of a Bronze Age cemetery (PRN 28236).

##### **3.2.3 Iron Age**

Settlement in the area continued into the Iron Age, with a hillfort, Hen Gaer (PRN 2015) just to the east of the site, on the summit of Allt Ddél.

#### **3.3 ROMAN**

A Roman road (PRN 5222) runs north south along the eastern edge of the assessment site. The road has been traced from Caersws to Bow Street and its line has been followed by later roads including the modern A487.

#### **3.4 MEDIEVAL**

Llangorwen is the site of a medieval settlement (PRN 10913), now deserted, that formerly contained a chapel (PRN 12439) and possibly a mill (PRN 28237). The exact site of the settlement is not known, but it may have been immediately to the north of All Saints Church. Rees (1932), on his *Map of South Wales and the Borders in*

*Fourteenth Century*, depicts the assessment site as common meadowland in the Manor of Lanpadarn Fawr.

The names of Tynrabbi (PRN 10699), thought to mean *The Abbot's House* and the adjacent Coed Tyn'r-yr-abbey suggest that they may have been monastic land. However, there is some confusion over the origins of the name and more research is needed to resolve the issue.

There has been a house at Rhyd-Tir-Uchaf (PRN 10065 - also known as Rhydhir Uchaf - Rhydhir = *long ford*) since at least the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, but the name Rhydhir has been in use since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Cooper 1982, 245), when it was a recognised landmark and boundary point.

### **3.5 POST-MEDIEVAL & MODERN**

The present landscape has been established since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but some elements, notably many of the roads and tracks as well as the fording and bridging points, are certainly earlier. The courses of the Afon Clarach and Bowstreet Brook have changed and been modified since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Originally the Bowstreet Brook joined the Afon Clarach farther to the west than the present junction. Its old course is clearly shown by some of the field boundaries and a depression across the field to the north of the church (A-A Fig 1). The big changes in the course of the brook suggest that it was altered deliberately. An embankment along the north bank of the brook probably dates from this change in course. Further, more detailed study of the cartographic and documentary sources may provide more information and possibly a date for the change.

Most of the farms are post-medieval, although some may have medieval origins, Rhyd-yr-uchaf for example.

A rapid examination of the field names on tithe and estate maps revealed two fields called Cae'r Odyn (*Kiln Field*), indicating the former presence of limekilns (PRNs 28239 and 35893). Nothing is visible at either site, although there may be some buried remains. There is a small quarry (PRN 35894) at Nantsiriol, probably associated with the limekiln (PRN 35893).

The Aberystwyth to Machynllyth railway was constructed across the area in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Modern housing has been built on the western fringes of Bow Street and around the crossroads at Llangorwen.

### **3.6 UNDATED FEATURES**

Two probable enclosures (PRNs 11826 and 11827) have been recognised from aerial photographs. Their ages and former functions are unknown, although it is likely that they date from the later prehistoric period.

The west and north edges of an extensive sub-rectangular hollow have been recorded in the field immediately to the north of the churchyard (Ludlow 1994, 8). The date and character of the hollow are unknown, although there are a number of possibilities.

A building was shown in the vicinity on a map of c.1800 (NLW ref: Gogerddan RM B86). On the Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st edition 6" coverage of 1888 a large enclosure is marked north of the churchyard; the north wall of the churchyard and the Llangorwen - Aberystwyth road formed its south and the west sides. Later OS maps show two buildings fronting onto the road just north of the churchyard wall, but the enclosure was no longer marked. Clearly some further investigation is required in this area.

### **3.7 THE POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE**

The appraisal has so far been confined to the known archaeological sites and features. This section is intended to broaden that discussion to highlight the enormous potential of the area for further archaeological discoveries. It is clear from the distribution and number of known sites that the area around the Clarach valley has a long history of settlement and it is reasonable to assume that the fertile valley would have been a focus for food collection and production. Therefore, there is good reason to suppose that there other sites and features may be buried by the fluvial deposits in the valley bottom.

The anaerobic and waterlogged conditions of fluvial deposits preserve organic material that is usually lost on dry sites. This means that many forms of archaeological evidence including wood, leather, textiles, plant and insect remains survive on wet sites giving a more comprehensive picture of past activity than otherwise available. Furthermore, the sediments of the valley floor have, over time, acted as a trap for pollen, plant and insect remains from the valley floor itself and blown in from the surrounding area. Sampling and analysis of this material can give a dated sequence of natural and anthropomorphic changes to the landscape.

### **3.8 STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS**

Three sites close to the assessment area have a statutory designation. These are:

<b>PRN</b>	<b>NGR</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
7071	SN 60288375	Pen-y-bont	Cottage	Post Med.	LB2
7073	SN 60328346	Cwm Cynfelyn Stables	Stable	Post Med.	LB2
7086	SN 60378347	Cwm Cynfelin	Dwelling	Post Med.	LB2

All three are outside the limits of the proposed development area as shown on the plan supplied, although Pen-y-bont lies right on the very edge of the area and would be affected should development take place up to the westernmost boundary.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1 POTENTIAL AND PROBLEMS**

This appraisal has been rapid and far from exhaustive, but it has shown that the landscape within the assessment area has a long history of use and change. Three sites with statutory designations have been identified close to the assessment area and other areas of concern which may affect any future development proposals have been highlighted.

- The present landscape survives largely intact from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with some elements being much older. The coherency of the landscape would be lost should development of the site proceed.
- The possible Bronze Age cemetery beneath the church may be extensive and could extend into the proposed development area. Any ground disturbance works at the west end of the assessment site could impact directly on the cemetery.
- The fluvial deposits on the valley bottom may be masking significant archaeological material. Ground disturbance works affecting these deposits have the potential for wide-ranging and severe implications for the buried archaeological resource. These include the threat of direct damage to sites, features or deposits by ground disturbance works. Furthermore, any changes in the anaerobic and waterlogged conditions of the sediments on the valley bottom will lead to the degradation and possible loss of the fragile archaeological material they contain.

### **4.2 FUTURE WORK**

The Clarach Valley is an integral part of the wider landscape and to gain a clear understanding of its full importance and potential it would be necessary to carry out a more detailed and wider-ranging assessment. Therefore, should the proposals for development of the area be taken forward it is recommended that a full desk-based assessment of the site be carried out to further define the character and extent of the archaeological resource and to assess the implications of development on the site.

## 5. SITES IN AND CLOSE TO THE ASSESSMENT SITE

### 5.1 TABLE OF SITES

PRN	NGR	NAME	TYPE	PERIOD	STATUS
<b>28239</b>	SN 604839	Cae Kiln Placename	Kiln	Post Med.	
<b>35893</b>	SN 61458445	Cae'r Odyn Placename	Kiln	Post Med.	
<b>35894</b>	SN 61248453	Nantsiriol	Quarry	Post Med.	
2015	SN 633844	Hen Gaer Pen Gaer	Hillfort	Iron Age	SAM
2016	SN 63228440	Hen Gaer	Round barrow	Bronze Age	SAM
5222		Caersws - Bow Street	Road	Roman	
5408	SN 624846	Bow Street Mill site	Corn Mill	Post Med.	
5412	SN 60338384	All Saints	Church	Post Med.	
6182	SN 60108292	Bryn Carnedd	Round Barrow	Bronze Age	
6183	SN 61968471	Bryn y Castell	Placename	Unknown	
7068	SN 60868445	Porth Angel	Dwelling	Post Med.	
7071	SN 60288375	Pen-y-bont	Cottage	Post Med.	LB2
7073	SN 60328346	Cwm Cynfelyn Stables	Stable	Post Med.	LB2
7074	SN 62358481	Glan Nant	Cottage	Post Med.	
7086	SN 60378347	Cwm Cynfelin	Dwelling	Post Med.	LB2
8295	SN 60338384	All Saints Church	Cremation	Bronze Age	
8296	SN 60338384	All Saints Church	Cremation urn	Bronze Age	
8319	SN 612825	Ash Grange	Occupation site	Bronze Age	
10065	SN 61888375	Rhyd-tir-uchaf	Dwelling	Post Med.	
10699	SN 603844	Tynrabbi Coed Ty'n-yr-Abbey	Monastic land? Placename	Medieval? Post Med.	
10913	SN 60308395	Cronwernew Llangorwen	Settlement	Medieval	
11826	SN 62558350	Gogerddan	Cropmark Enclosure?	Prehistoric?	
11827	SN 62608350	Gogerddan	Cropmark Enclosure?	Prehistoric?	
12439	SN 604839	Llangorwen	Chapel	Medieval	
12439	SN 604839	All Saints	Chapel	Medieval	
19214	SN 60518438		Chapel	Post Med.	
19215	SN 60428413		School	Post Med.	
19216	SN 60188392		Vicarage	Post Med.	
19218	SN 60288478	Pont Llangorwen	Bridge	Post Med.	
19225	SN 61328376	Rhyd-tir-isaf	Aqueduct	Post Med.	
19237	SN 62258462		Mill	Post Med.	
19238	SN 62108465		Chapel	Post Med.	
19242	SN 61988373	Bont Rhyd-Tir	Bridge	Post Med.	
28236	SN 60338384	All Saints Church Llangorwen	Cremation cemetery	Bronze Age	
28237	SN 60058392	Felin Fach	Mill	Medieval? Post Med.	

*Sites inside the assessment site boundaries are shown in bold*

## **APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF RESEARCH ARCHIVE**

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

**A.** Copy of the report.

**B.** Notes from site visits.

**D.** Site photographs - catalogue, colour slides, B/W contact sheets.

**G.** Documentary data, including primary and published sources.

**I.** Draft copies of report.

**J.** Publication drawings.

**M.** Miscellaneous correspondence

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

The project archive is currently held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire as project number 35895.

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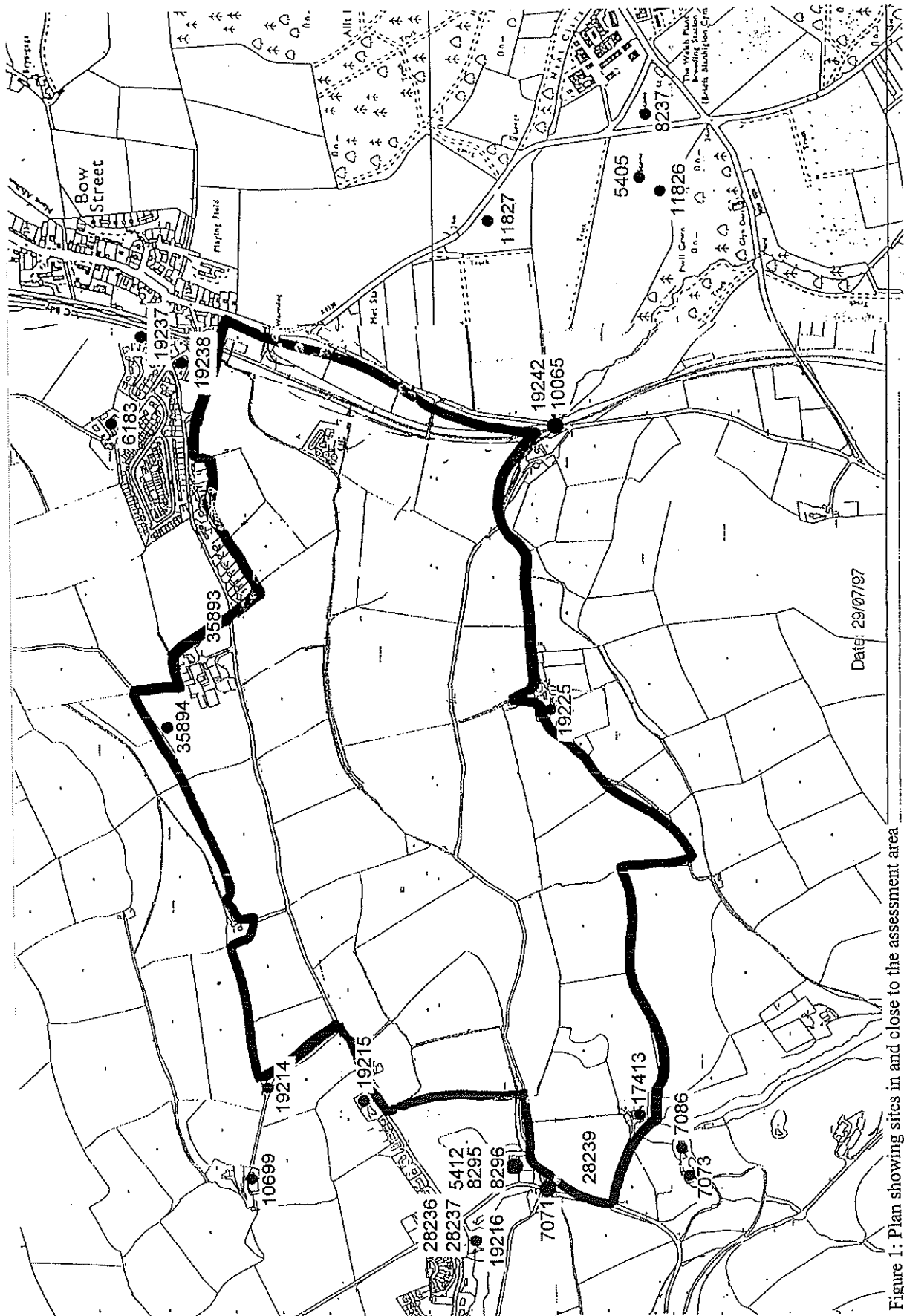


Figure 1: Plan showing sites in and close to the assessment area