

MANORBIER

Settlement morphology, topography and archaeology

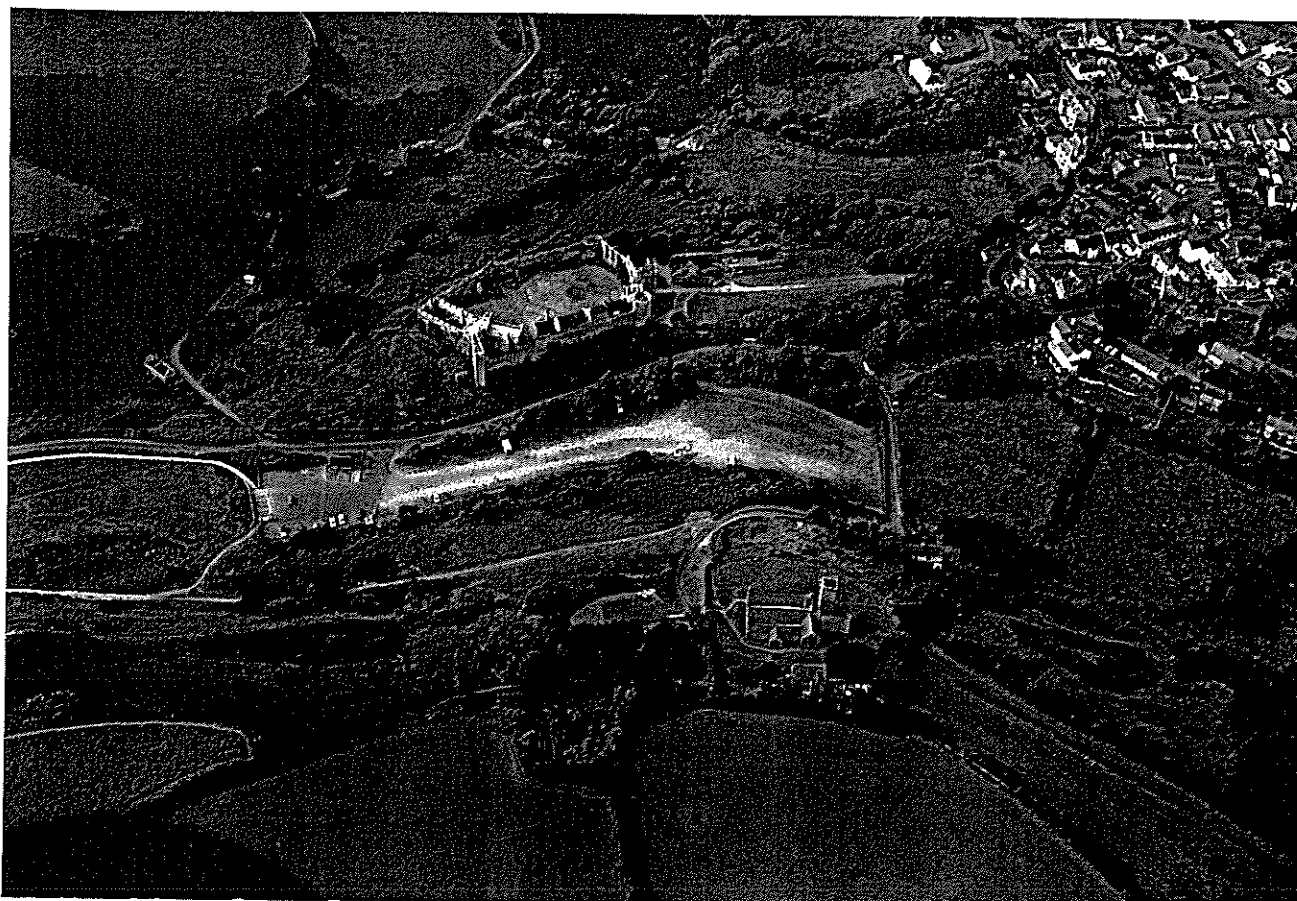
to accompany

CONSERVATION AREA STATEMENTS

prepared by H.J. James BA FSA MIFA

for Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

as part of a service level agreement with Cambria Archaeology



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MANORBIER

Name and Tenorial History.

The place-name, rather than any archaeological evidence from the settlement itself, is the most telling evidence for a pre-Norman origin to Manorbier. The first element is *maenor*, which does not equate with the later 'manor' but is rather a Welsh administrative and economic unit within a commote (*cwmwd*). The second element is a personal name - Pirrus - whose name is also preserved in the Welsh name for Caldey - *Ynys Byr*. Pirrus is recorded as priest on Caldey in the 7th century *Life* of St Samson. To summarize a lot of recent academic work, it is likely that many settlements, and estates in this part of South Pembrokeshire have their origins in early Welsh territorial and administrative units - a well-settled, long cleared and cultivated area. "The place was clearly the *caput* of an ancient territorial division". (B. G. Charles. 1991, *The Placenames of Pembrokeshire* Vol. II, p.698.)

After the Norman conquest of South Pembrokeshire in the late 11th/early 12th centuries, Manorbier became part of the earldom of Pembroke. In terms of feudal tenure, Manorbier was a 'mesne lordship', or 'honorial barony' held for a service of 5 knights' fees. The earliest lords were the de Barris, a middle ranking Anglo-Norman family, with Welsh blood, from Barry in South Glamorgan, who took part in the mid 12th century conquest of Ireland. A second branch of the family was established there, the Barrys of Olethan. In 1146, Giraldus Cambrensis was born in Manorbier Castle, fourth son of William de Barri and Anghard the daughter of Gerald of Windsor, Lord of Carew and Nest, the daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, last King of south Wales. Whilst it is important to Manorbier to be known as the birthplace of one of the most famous medieval Welshmen, Gerald's description of his family home is still of relevance to modern conservation policies.

The Lordship consisted of Manorbier, Penally and Begelly and was held by the de Barris until 1359. Thereafter there was a rapid succession of lords, mainly absentee and the manor reverted to the Crown who leased it out. In 1601 the manorial steward, Thomas Bowen of Trefloyne obtained a lease of the manor; his grandson Thomas conveyed all his properties to Sir Erasmus Philipps of Picton Castle in 1670. The Picton Estate have retained possession ever since and the present management of the Castle is carried out by Black Island Ltd.

Economic History:

Medieval Manorbier was very much an agricultural settlement, with clear evidence of communal cultivation in a large 'open field' on its north-east side and coast edge grazing to the south. To the west, during the de Barri period at least, were the demesne lands of the lords close to the castle - consisting of a park, woodland and the all-important source of lordly revenue, the mill with a large mill-pond on the west side of the Castle. Most of these park lands were enclosed for farming during the later Middle Ages. Because of absentee lords, the demesne was rented out and this may be the origin of the distinctive form of tenure, 'censory holdings', dependent on the will of the lord, characteristic of Manorbier and remarked upon by Fenton (see also Walker, 1991).

The Tudor traveller and antiquary, John Leland writing in 1536 described Manorbier thus: "a towne of husbondry .. ruines of Pirrhys Castel there, many walles yet standyng hole, do openly appere". There are fortunately 3 detailed Surveys of the Manor of Manorbier in the early 17th century, which suggest that Manorbier was the largest of the four settlements in the manor, followed by Jameston, Newton and Penally. In 1811, Fenton described the village as lying north-east of the Castle and "consisting of a few cottages inhabited, and a great number in ruins." Evidently a contraction in the settlement since the early 17th century. As the Tithe Map shows, in 1841, houses and cottages in Manorbier were mostly restricted to the southern side of the main street.

Smuggling may be termed other things besides 'economic activity' but it was a feature of 18th century and early 19th century Manorbier Bay and Freshwater East, where illegal cargoes were landed. "In early April., 1804, the tide-surveyor of Tenby, with his boat's crew, seized 47 ankers of brandy at Manorbier. The Rev. Sir Thomas Gery Cullum, Bart., recorded in his diary for July 1811 how 'of late years the [Manorbier] castle has been appropriated to smuggling, on a most daring scale. The person concerned having hired the castle of the farmer, and having built a house contiguous, used to fill subterranean apartments and towers with spirits. A number of casks were soon discovered floating in the reservoir. At last, after several seizures, this illicit trade was put a stop to by Lord Cawdor, who was nearly killed in the attempt". (D. Howell, 1987, p. 289).

In the second half of the century Manorbier began to develop again - this time as seaside retreat 'for persons of quality'. The tourist industry undoubtedly developed with the rise of Tenby as a fashionable resort from the early 19th century onwards. The inquiring tourist could make a day's excursion from Tenby. Richard Fenton, in his *Historical Tour Through Pembrokeshire* 1811 made a diversion from The Ridgeway to visit and makes all the connections that have been celebrated since: the birthplace of Giraldus, the castle and surrounds 'the most perfect model of an old Norman baron's residence, with all its appendages, church, mill, dove-house, ponds, park and grove still to be seen and traced', together with the oft-repeated assertion that Gerald's own description can still be recognised in these very features. With the opening of the pembroke to Tenby railway in 1863, visitors could arrive at Manorbier Newton station and travel down to the village by trap.

Some families lodged in houses and farms, but others built residences for themselves and many people retired to Manorbier. In the later 19th century buildings like Glan y Mor Hotel, the parish hall and Morfa Terrace were built. In the first half of the 20th century it was a rather exclusive seaside village, favoured by literary people. Blue Dolphins (formerly Sea View) Cottage on the northern outskirts of the village has been Listed partly for these associations, being the summer residence of Virginia Woolf for a number of years. All this has produced the present architectural 'language' of Manorbier with a mixture of older simpler buildings and fine houses and 'villas' striving for an elevated position and a view. This has inevitably produced a dilution of the medieval and early modern plan form. Mrs L. Thompson, of Manorbier Garden Centre, member of the Community Council, has an encyclopediac knowledge of who lived where at different periods and there can be very few other small Pembrokeshire settlements that have had such a range of visitors and residents from the wider world of business, finance, law and the arts.

Location and Topography.

Manorbier is sited a little inland of the south-west facing Manorbier Bay on the South Pembrokeshire coast between Tenby and Pembroke, south of 'The Ridgeway', the ancient route between the two towns, now the boundary of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

Manorbier castle is built on a rocky promontary that extends south-westwards towards the sea between two valleys. The western valley, the larger of the two, contains the millstream and extends northwards towards Norton Farm. The eastern valley contains a smaller stream - Shute Stream which rises below Hill Farm. The village itself lies along a street extends north-eastwards from the castle across the junction of the two valleys heading towards Lydstep. At this junction point a northward road (now the B4585) leads towards the distant Ridgeway. The fourth road, no more than a track (known variously as Mead Lane or Mud Lane) leads towards Hill Farm (and former coastal grazing) and a limekiln by Croft Cottage. the pre that

Undoubtedly the biggest change in the topography of the settlement has been within the lower part the conjoined valleys below the castle leading to the coast and to the beach itself. It is possible that in prehistoric and early historic times there was more of a tidal inlet within the valley than at present. There are numerous finds of mesolithic neolithic, and bronze age flints in coastal locations around Manorbier and the rather unusual coast-edge location of the Scheduled King's Quoit neolithic chambered tomb on the headland on the south side of Manorbier Bay further argues for prehistoric settlement. As elsewhere along the whole south Wales coast sand incursions have altered the foreshores in many bays. Archaeological excavations at Stackpole Warren in 1978, some 7 km. west of Manorbier showed that sand began to cover cultivated land in the Bronze Age with subsequent periods of sand accumulation in the middle ages. It is particularly significant that Gerald, in his description of Manorbier in the late 12th century speaks of the valley 'rendered sandy by the violence of the winds'. The 1609 Survey mentioned above has valuable evidence on coastal change where encroachment by the sea is recorded in Manorbier Bay below the Mill and that 'the sea windes doe violentlie drive uppe the sand upon every storme, the land next the mill is quite covered with sand and the pastures lost and consumed'. The tailrace of the mill flowing down to the sea had to be constantly cleared of sand.

In this century the topography of the lower valley has been further altered by the removal in the 1930s of large quantities of sand and gravel from the beach head area. More recently works have been carried out to level a car park and widen roads close to the beach. This southern side of the valley containing the car park, below the Church was known as the Burrows and sand has accumulated to considerable depths right up to the church itself, being open to the prevailing south-westerly winds.

The Description of Manorbier by Giraldus Cambrensis.

In his '*Itinerary through Wales*', an account of his journey accompanying Archbishop Baldwin in 1188, preaching the Crusade, Gerald includes a laudatory description of his home and birthplace at Manorbier. This is of more than scholarly interest and relevant to planning and conservation issues in that many consider that the features described by Gerald still exist on the ground and could therefore be 'recreated'. It is rare to have a landscape description from the 12th century, especially when it can be located to a specific area as at Manorbier. The features described lay mostly on the west side of the Castle within what was a Park, which forms part of the Conservation Area. This is undoubtedly of the highest importance in historic landscape and archaeological terms. (see concluding section for further details).

Briefly, three factors should be taken into account in using Gerald's description to justify changes or developments west of the Castle:

- Whilst the description undoubtedly refers to real features in an identifiable location, the description is written by a highly accomplished 12th century scholar according to the rules of rhetoric, and singles out those features which demonstrate the 'seigneurial' status of his family.
- It is important to understand what might be meant in contemporary terms by such entities as 'fishponds', or 'vineyards'. I will shortly look again at the original latin text and make a fresh gloss on the terms used, taking advantage of much recent work on the Dictionary of Medieval Latin.
- The 12th century Castle covered a smaller area and was different in appearance to today's building; similarly, the 'fishpond', mill etc have all survived into recent times through being altered, rebuilt and extended.

Settlement Plan Form:

The process of morpho-genesis and classification of plan forms established by Roberts depend on the original alignments of streets and property boundaries being fossilised in later forms, generally seen at best in the first or second editions of the large scale 1:2500 plans. However, as we have seen, there is evidence for a considerable contraction of settlement at Manorbier. Later 19th century revival as a sea-side village caused a reorganisation of property boundaries with many newer buildings being set back from the street frontage. Whilst the core of the village contracted, individual farms and scattered cottages developed on the outskirts, further blurring the original plan. The original plan form therefore is not so clear as for example at Angle or Trevine. The village did not develop additional functions like an annual fair; even manorial courts were held elsewhere. Entirely typical of its predominantly agricultural character however is the former existence of a cattle pound at the eastern end of the village - an enclosure later adapted as the Bier House.

The Castle expanded to enclose an outer ward which may possibly have had the earliest medieval village within it. The road extending north-eastwards from the castle thus formed the main street, perhaps with a single planned row on its southern side. A very steep fall in level marks the course of the road leading now to the Car park but

formerly to the mill and the beach, which has made a deep hollow way, now edged by high walls approaching Castle Mead Hotel. A similar steep descent marks the start of 'Mead Lane'. A major feature influencing the layout of the village must have been the large block of land to the north-east containing narrow, enclosed strip fields, undoubtedly once a large open-field. It has been convincingly argued that was part of a large 'co-axial' field system or systems, others being the very large system extending southwards from the Ridgeway, which may well be of pre-Norman date, perhaps 9th/10th century. The road from Lydstep certainly takes its course around the eastern and southern side of this large block of land at Manorbier; the present A4139 is clearly a later feature cutting across it. Manorbier village has been sited at the south-western corner of this large field system. There is insufficient surviving topographical evidence to say whether the original village row could have been contemporary with what is clearly a major episode of land organisation, or was founded in a later intake from that field system.

Another peculiarity of the layout of the key village components at Manorbier is the outlying position of the church on the opposite side of the valley to the castle, south-west of the village. The church of St James dates to the 12th century and was probably a new foundation by the de Barris. It has a Grade 1 Listing because of its valuable series of stone vaults and furnishings. Early links with Monkton Priory were formalized in 1301 when Sir John de Barri granted the church to Monkton Priory. The architectural inheritance of this is thought to be the ruins adjacent to Church Cottage (all Listed) which indicate five separate buildings, probably all part of a grange established on the site by Monkton Priory. Although, as an Alien Priory its possessions were lost to the crown in the Hundred Years War, and it became simply the parish church at The Dissolution, the medieval inheritance of a separate settlement and tenurial unit from the village proper persisted.

Expansion of the settlement during the second half of the 19th and into the 20th century has been driven by tourism and the popularity of the village as a dormitory and retirement settlement. It has in the main developed along the access roads from the north-east and north and Mead Lane to the south east. A secondary small settlement developed south-east of the mill, below the castle. The remains of these buildings can be seen as part of the walls enclosing the public toilets at the seaward end of the Carpark

Sites and Areas of Archaeological Interest.

A photocopy of the SMR record map, including the permatrace overlay on which post-medieval sites are recorded is attached. The production of this statement has enhanced the base record. A list is given below of the record entries (prns = primary record numbers), as it stands in March 1999. The Record is a dynamic database and continues to grow and develop.

prn	short description
4206- 4209	Flint-working floors
4220	find spot of Bronze Age stone macehead
4212	The Old Pigeon House - dovecote, listed adns scheduled ancient mon. (SAM) Pe 459
4213	The King's Quoit - neolithic chambered tomb - SAM Pe 35
4214	Bronze Age burnt mound - may have been eroded away by the sea
4215	flint-working floor
4216	flint-working floor
4219	medieval parish church of St James.
4221	Manorbier Castle SAM Pe 4
7286	Sea View Cottage - LB II
8233	Manorbier Castle - fishpond
10010	mesolithic flint finds
14829	earthwork at Manorbier Castle - Civil War ravelin
15930	Manorbier Mill
15931	Vicarage
15932	Limekiln
16506	Limekiln
32813	? remains of boat house
33716	windmill, Tarr farm
33718	Deer park - medieval documentary refs and place-name
33719	schoolhouse.

The castle and its environs - 'the Gerald landscape' are of major archaeological importance. Scheduled Monument Consent is of course required for works within the scheduled area, but any proposed works in the environs should be subject to the full procedures of archaeological assessment.

Any deep drainage or other earth-moving works over the Car park and beach head area - sea defences for example - should be subject to archaeological evaluation. They offer great potential for information on the valley before its besandment. The density of prehistoric flint finds gives a good indication of the high archaeological potential of the area.

There is no information available of which to base an assessment of the archaeological potential of the village itself. Probably therefore only major works would justify archaeological intervention. Any linear works - gas, electricity etc offer the potential for information on nature, depths and sequences of buried deposits and should therefore be subject to archaeological watching briefs.

n / 07.

Bibliography:

D. Howell, 1987, 'Society, 1660-1793' in *Pembrokeshire County History Vol III* Early Modern Pembrokeshire 1536-1815. Haverfordwest. pp 256-298.

D. Cathcart-King and J.C. Perks, 1970, 'Manorbier Castle, Pembrokeshire' *Arch Camb* vol 119 pp. 83-118

R.F. Walker, 1991, 'The Manor of Manorbier, Pembrokeshire in the early seventeenth century', *National Library of Wales Jnl.* XXVII. no. 2. 131-174.

Maenorbŷr Manorbier

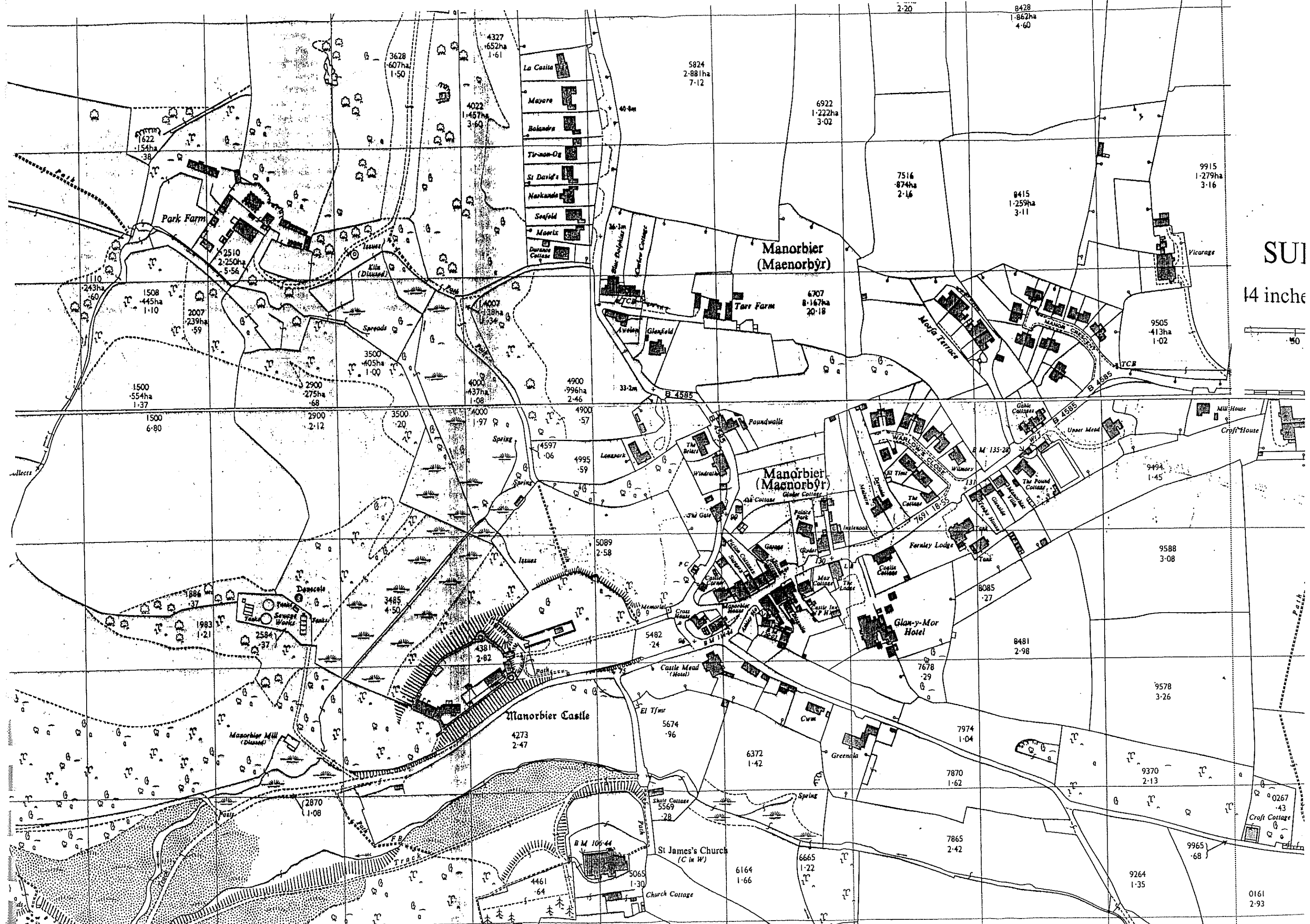
Ardal Gadwraeth Arfaethedig
Proposed Conservation Area

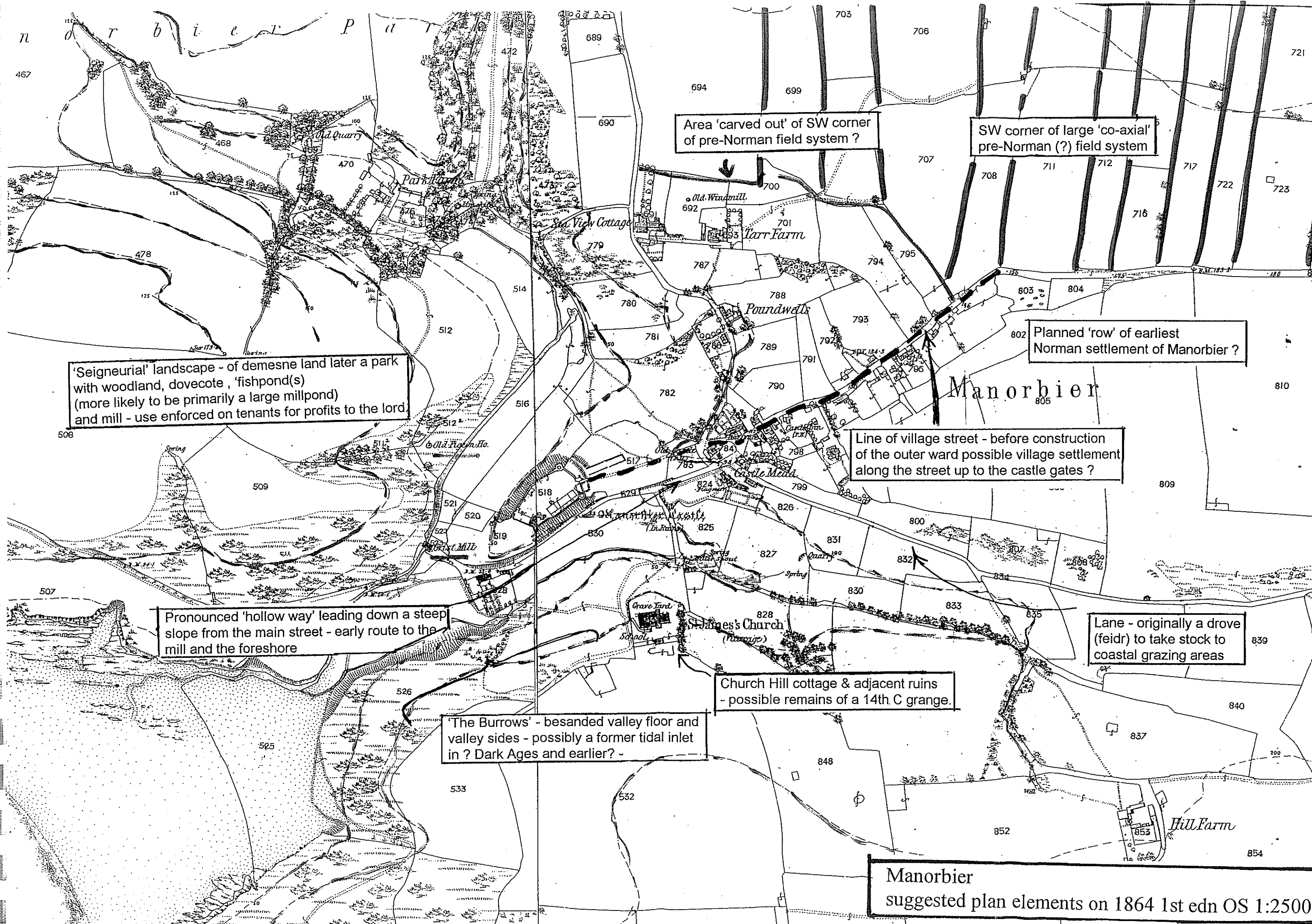
Graddfa Scale 1:5000

Rhagfyr December 1993



The material contained in this plot has been produced from an Ordnance Survey map with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright.





Area 'carved out' of SW corner of pre-Norman field system ?

SW corner of large 'co-axial' pre-Norman (?) field system

'Seigneurial' landscape - of demesne land later a park with woodland, dovecote, 'fishpond(s)' (more likely to be primarily a large millpond) and mill - use enforced on tenants for profits to the lord

Planned 'row' of earliest Norman settlement of Manorbier ?

Line of village street - before construction of the outer ward possible village settlement along the street up to the castle gates ?

Pronounced 'hollow way' leading down a steep slope from the main street - early route to the mill and the foreshore

Lane - originally a drove (feidr) to take stock to coastal grazing areas

Church Hill cottage & adjacent ruins - possible remains of a 14th C grange.

'The Burrows' - besanded valley floor and valley sides - possibly a former tidal inlet in ? Dark Ages and earlier? -

Manorbier suggested plan elements on 1864 1st edn OS 1:2500

In our time, a person residing at the castle of Penbroch, found a brood of young weasels concealed within a fleece in his dwelling house, which he carefully removed and hid. The mother, irritated at the loss of her young, which she had searched for in vain, went to a vessel of milk that had been set aside for the use of the master's son, and raising herself up, polluted it with her deadly poison; thus revenging, as it were, the loss of her young, by the destruction of the child. The man, observing what passed, carried the fleece back to its former place; when the weasel, agitated by maternal solicitude, between hope and fear, on finding again her young, began to testify her joy by her cries and actions, and returning quickly to the vessel, overthrew it; thus, in gratitude for the recovery of her own offspring, saving that of her host from danger.

In another place, an animal of the same species had brought out her young into a plain for the enjoyment of the sun and air; when an insidious kite carried off one of them. Concealing herself with the remainder behind some shrubs, grief suggested to her a stratagem of exquisite revenge; she extended herself on a heap of earth, as if dead, within sight of the plunderer, and (as success always increases avidity) the bird immediately seized her and flew away, but soon fell down dead by the bite of the poisonous animal.

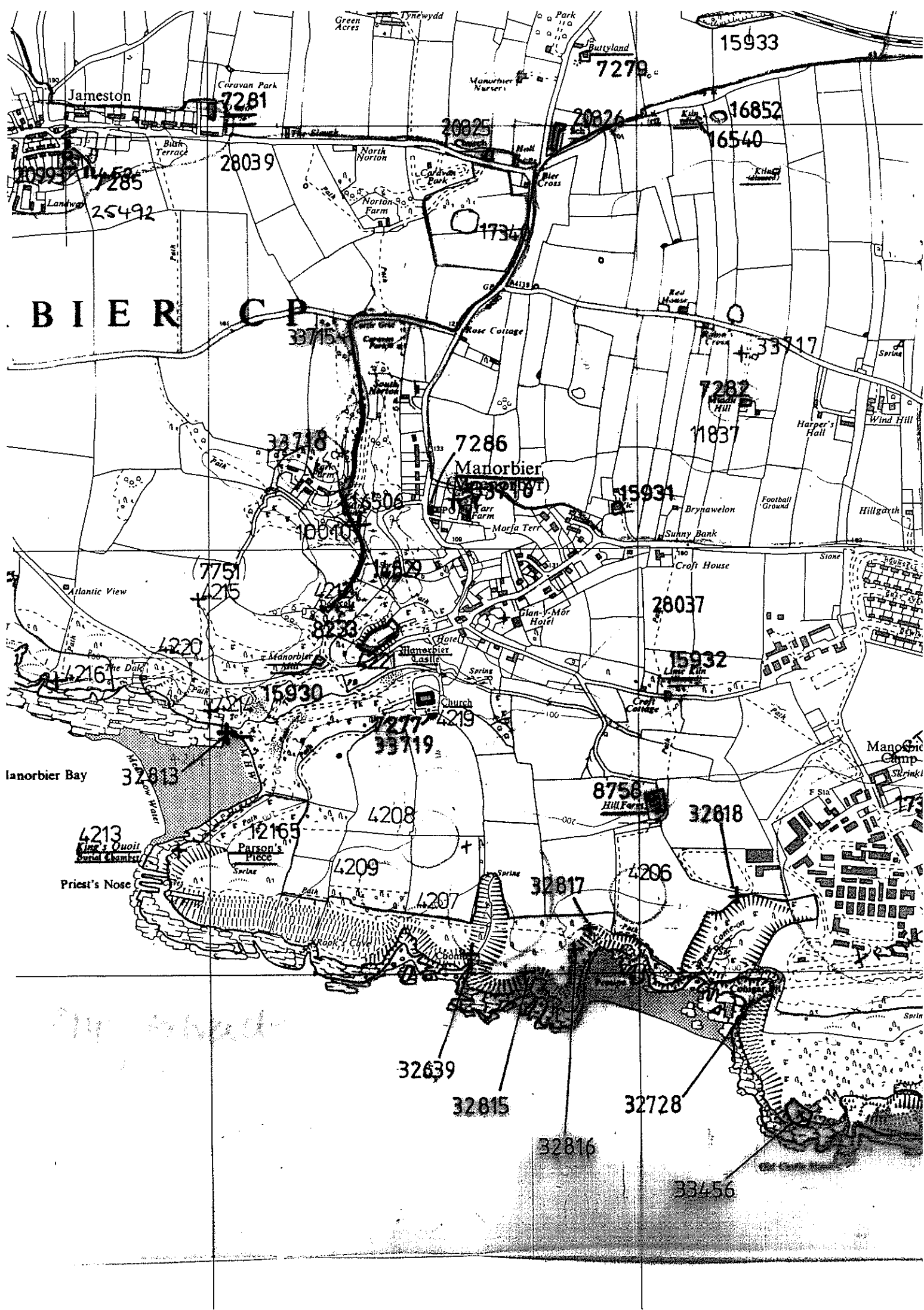
The castle called Maenor Pyrr, ¹ that is, the mansion of Maenor Pyrr, now known by the name of Manorbier, is a small village on the sea coast, between Tenby and Pembroke, with the remaining shell of a large castle. Our author has given a far-fetched etymology to this castle and the adjoining island, in calling them the mansion and island of Pyrrhus; a much more natural and congenial conjecture may be made in supposing Maenor Pyrr to be derived from Maenor, a Manor, and Pyrr the plural of Por, a lord; i.e. the Manor of the lords, and, consequently, Inys Pyrr, the Island of the lords. As no mention whatever is made of this castle in the Welsh Chronicle, I am inclined to think it was only a castellated mansion, and therefore considered of no military importance in those days of continued warfare throughout Wales. It is one of the most interesting spots in our author's Itinerary, for 't was the property of the Barri family, and the birth-place of Giraldus; in the parish church, the sepul-

Pyrrus, who also possessed the island of Chalvey, which the Welsh call Inys Pyrr, or the island of Pyrrus, is distant about three miles from Penbroch. It is excellently well defended by turrets and bulwarks, and is situated on the summit of a hill extending on the western side towards the sea-port, having on the northern and southern sides a fine fish-pond under its walls, as conspicuous for its grand appearance, as for the depth of its waters, and a beautiful orchard on the same side, inclosed on one part by a vineyard, and on the other by a wood, remarkable for the projection of its rocks, and the height of its hazel trees. On the right hand of the promontory, between the castle and the church, near the site of a very large lake and mill, a rivulet of never-failing water flows through a valley, rendered sandy by the violence of the winds. Towards the west, the Severn sea, bending its course to Ireland, enters a hollow bay at some distance from the castle; and the southern rocks, if extended a little further towards the north, would render it a most excellent harbour for shipping. From this point of sight, you will see almost all the ships from Great Britain, which the east wind drives upon the Irish coast, daringly brave the inconstant waves and raging sea. This country is well supplied with corn, sea-fish, and imported wines; and what is preferable to every other advantage, from its vicinity to Ireland, it is tempered by a salubrious air. Demetia, therefore, with its seven cantreds, is the most beautiful, as well as the most powerful district of Wales; Penbroch, the finest part of the province of Demetia; and the place I have just described, the most delightful part of Penbroch. It is evident, therefore, that Maenor Pirr is the pleasantest spot in Wales; and the author may be pardoned for having thus extolled his native soil, his genial territory, with a profusion of praise and admiration.

chral effigy of a near relation, perhaps a brother, is still extant, in good preservation. Our author has evidently made a digression in order to describe this place.



Extract from Manorbier Tithe Map 1841



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST SITE RECORD Site No. 38752

[illegible]

COMPILER'S NAME:

DATE _____

25

A REPORT

A Report 'Caldsey Island: Settlement morphology, topography and archaeology' by H.J. James, submitted to PCNP. in September 1999 as part of a Service Level Agreement between PCNP and Cambria Archaeology, to provide support documentation for the Authority's conservation areas on the historic environment.

29

LONG DESCRIPTION

This Conservation Area support- Report differs from the others commissioned by PCNP (38746, 38747, 38748, 38749, 38750, 38751, 38752, 38753, 38754, 38755). in that it does not have a nucleated settlement at its core. Nor does the Conservation Area cover the whole island.

The Report aimed to complement, rather than repeat, information already contained in the 1997 HARP Report by N. Johnson, and the 2 volume structural analysis of Coldrey Energy. N. Ludlow. (1994, p. 1).

and thus concentrates on field systems, field boundaries

30 PART OF:

and outcrops, as well as coastal change in Priny Bay.

31 | CONSISTS OF:

32 DIVISION OF:

33 DIVIDED INTO:

34 | CONSISTS OF:

43 BROAD CLASS:

44 SITE TYPE THESAURUS:

35

36 D

OWNERSHIP AND TENANCY DETAILS