

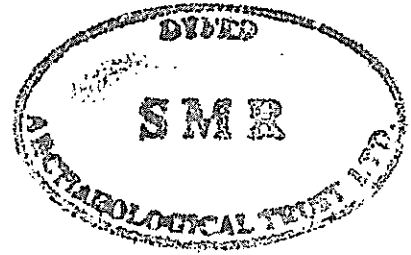
# TREFFGARNE BEND

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REVIEW



Report No. 2001/33

Report Prepared for:  
WS ATKINS CONSULTANTS LIMITED



CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2001/33  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 42378

JUNE 2001

## TREFFGARNE BEND - AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REVIEW

By

Anwen Cooper

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**TREFFGARNE BEND - AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REVIEW**

**REPORT NUMBER 2001/33**

**JUNE 2001**

This report has been prepared by Anwen Cooper

Position Project Officer (Field Operations)

Signature .....  ..... Date 12/6/01 .....

This report has been checked and approved by Gwilym Hughes on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position Trust Director

Signature ..... Date.....

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report

## **A40 Treffgarne bend - an archaeological and historical review, June 2001**

### **Summary**

*Treffgarne Bend lies on the A40 Trunk Road between Fishguard and Haverfordwest at SM 1958 2251. In June 2001 a desktop study was undertaken to identify the archaeological potential of the area around this site and assess the impact of proposed road improvements. The study suggested that the proposed works were unlikely to disturb archaeological deposits and that it is likely that no archaeological condition or consent would be needed for the work to take place. However, the area is of great archaeological interest and includes an unusual density of later prehistoric settlement, potential evidence of medieval settlement and religious activity and a variety of post medieval features. In view of this it is recommended that the Heritage Management Section of Cambria Archaeology should be notified if and when the work is to take place so that a visit could be made. This would ensure that any unforeseen impact upon the archaeology was properly identified and recorded.*

### **Introduction**

Treffgarne Bends is an s-shaped section of the A40 Trunk Road between Fishguard and Haverfordwest where it swerves to run between the prominent rock outcrops of Great and Little Treffgarne Rocks at SM 1958 2251 (Fig.1). The bend has been identified as an accident black spot and a feasibility study is being prepared by WS Atkins Consultants Limited to try to improve on its safety. In view of the physical constraints posed by the narrow corridor through which the road runs - defined by Great Treffgarne Rocks to the east and Little Treffgarne Rocks, the Afon Cleddau and the railway line to Fishguard to the west - it was proposed that one possible solution was to trim back Great Treffgarne Rocks so that the forward visibility for north-bound traffic was improved. This proposal was believed to be in the immediate vicinity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Great Treffgarne Rocks. As result, archaeologists from Cambria Archaeology were commissioned to undertake a desktop study to identify the impact of the proposals on the archaeological resource of the area in June 2001.

In the following report and accompanying maps, the PRN numbers refer to site records held in the Regional Sites and Monuments Record located at the offices of Cambria Archaeology in Llandeilo.

## **Aims and methodology**

The main aim of the study was to identify any archaeological or historical constraints associated with the defined corridor of the development. This was to be achieved through consultation with all parties and bodies with an archaeological or historic interest or responsibility within the area; a review of readily available material and any aerial photographic information; and a review of Ordnance Survey maps and other readily available historic maps. On this basis, it was intended that advice could be provided with regard to the correct procedures and consents associated with the proposed works; that a statement could be made of the archaeological and historic content of the study area and the archaeological constraints within the defined corridor of development; and that a plan could be provided showing the relevant historical and archaeological information within this area.

## **The study area and archaeological background**

In order to assess the archaeological context of the proposed works a 1km square study area was defined, centred upon Treffgarne Bend (Fig. 1). In addition a more detailed assessment was made of the area immediately surrounding the site (Fig. 2).

Treffgarne Bend lies to the west of a curve in the Afon Cleddau, about 1.5km to the north of Treffgarne Village. The corridor through which it runs is defined by the distinctive rock outcrops of Great Treffgarne Rocks to the west and Little Treffgarne Rocks to the east. The landscape that surrounds the site is shaped by a ridge of mountains that runs from southwest to northeast and the valley of the Avon Cleddau or Treffgarne Gorge that runs from north to south. It is characterised by rocky outcrops, rough hilltop pasture and steep-sided valleys that lie between 30 and 90m OD and sits on a geology of acid lava and tuff.

The archaeology of this area is not well understood, although it has been well recorded on the basis of documentary evidence, aerial photographs and historical maps. It is dominated by a remarkable concentration of later prehistoric settlement enclosures that border the Afon Cleddau on either side. This includes hilltop enclosures that surround and accentuate prominent rocky outcrops such as Great Treffgarne Rocks (PRN 2400) and more ephemeral valley-side earthwork enclosures, like the Nant y Coy enclosure (PRN 2403). Little is known of the Roman occupation of the area although it is possible that many of the earlier settlement enclosures continued to be occupied. Documentary sources suggest that a medieval settlement and religious site lay on the hillside just to the east of Treffgarne Bend (PRNs 12890 and 2405) although no physical evidence has yet been found of this occupation. Rough grassland on the slopes of Great Treffgarne Mountain is thought to have been used as common land during both the medieval and post-medieval periods (PRN 13821).

Over the last two centuries the area has been more intensively occupied. The road from Haverfordwest to Fishguard along which the development lies appears to have formed an axial route from north to south from at least the late eighteenth century onwards. The valley sides that line the road were dotted with small farms at the time of the Old Series OS surveyors drawings in 1810 and by the time of the Tithe Survey in the 1840's, land on the lower slopes of Treffgarne Gorge was divided into small enclosed fields. A corn mill had also been built, just to the northeast of Treffgarne Bend at Nant y Coy (PRN 8919). During the later nineteenth century, the sides of the gorge were exploited for the extraction of stone and the roadside is now pitted with evidence of small-scale quarrying. In 1887, the Great Western Railway Company bought a corridor of land through Treffgarne Gorge for the Haverfordwest to Fishguard Railway and shaped the landscape to accommodate this by diverting the river and cutting into the base of Treffgarne Rocks (Fig.4).

## **An archaeological and historical review (Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4)**

### **The archaeological context (Fig. 1)**

#### *The Bronze and Iron Ages*

The earliest known evidence of occupation within the study area is probably provided by a cluster of hut circles (PRN 2401) which lie about 250m to the west of Treffgarne Bend. These were recorded on nineteenth century maps as 'tumuli' but have been identified more recently from aerial photographs as hut circles (Fig. 3). They are generally thought to be of late Bronze Age or Iron Age date and may have been occupied at the same time as the larger Iron Age enclosures nearby (see below). They probably represent small-scale, ephemeral occupation by a fairly transient community of people and may have only been occupied on a seasonal basis.

The most remarkable aspect of the archaeology in the study area is the unusual concentration of later prehistoric enclosures that lie on the hilltops and valley sides to either side of Treffgarne Gorge and above the site of the proposed road cutting. This concentration is one of two such clusters of later prehistoric earthwork enclosures in Pembrokeshire, the other lying further to the east, just to the north of Llawhaden (Williams and Mytum 1998, 1-15).

Excavation has helped to untangle the chronology of enclosures of this sort but the nature of their occupation is still not well understood. Whilst some are located in apparently defensive positions on prominent rocky outcrops and are surrounded by substantial earthen banks, others are situated on more gentle terrain and seem unlikely to have been used defensively. Those in prominent positions may have marked landscape or social boundaries and could have been sited to enhance views both to and from the monument. Many such enclosures appear to have been occupied and contain evidence of circular post-built structures but little is known about how the spaces in between them were used. It is also difficult to tell when they were built and occupied. Evidence from excavated examples to the north of Llawhaden suggests that most were built between 600 and 50 BC and were used on and off into the 3rd and 4th centuries AD or even later in some cases (Williams and Mytum 1998, 122-150). They may all have been lived in at roughly the same time or could otherwise represent a sequence of earthwork enclosure construction over several centuries.



The group of enclosures at Treffgarne are apparently distinguished by their proximity to water sources, their enclosure by a single earthen bank and ditch and their uniformity of diameter with an average of 40m (Rigg 1977). The most prominent of these enclosures were recorded on nineteenth century maps although several others have been identified more recently from aerial photographs (Fig. 3). Seven such enclosures lie within the study area including a fine hilltop enclosure and Scheduled Ancient Monument at Great Treffgarne Rocks (PRN 2400) on the rocky promontory immediately to the west of Treffgarne Bends (see below); a less impressive (but still Scheduled) circular hillslope enclosure at Little Treffgarne Camp (PRN 2463) in a forestry plantation to the southeast of Treffgarne Bend; a hilltop enclosure of uncertain antiquity at Maiden Castle on the summit of Great Treffgarne Mountain; two hillslope enclosures to the south of Nant y Coy stream: one circular, the other smaller and rectangular (PRNs 2403 and 12793); and a large, double-ditched rectangular enclosure of unknown date on Little Treffgarne Mountain to the northeast of Treffgarne Bend. Together these comprise an unusual concentration of later prehistoric enclosures that deserve further investigation. This density of evidence also suggests that other prehistoric archaeological remains may lie within the area and are yet to be discovered.

#### *The medieval period*

The medieval occupation of the study area is poorly understood and is mainly known from documentary sources. The earliest mention of the name 'Trefgarn' dates to 1140 and can probably be translated to mean 'farmstead by the rock' (Charles 1992, 662-3). The manor of Trefgarn was later inherited by Elen, daughter of Robert de Vale (1208-92). Documentary sources refer to Little Treffgarne Abbey (PRN 2405) and Treffgarn medieval settlement (PRN 12890), the sites of which have been located to the hillside immediately to the east of Treffgarne Bend. However, their exact location is by no means certain and further research is needed to determine where they stood, their form and how and when they were occupied. It is also thought that Great Treffgarne Common (PRN 13821) was used during the medieval period. This occupies the north-facing slopes of Great Treffgarne Mountain and consists of 108.3ha of rough grassland (Rural Surveys Research Unit 1988, sheet 23). This area of land has remained unenclosed and its use as common land is known to have continued into the post-medieval and modern period.

#### *The post-medieval period*

The more recent history of the area is better understood and recorded on historical maps. The earliest map of the area is the Old Series OS surveyors drawings of 1810. This shows the route of the current A40 to have existed in its present form, running from north to south to the west of the Afon Cleddau (PRN 42379). It is likely that this was once a turnpike road and could be a route of even greater antiquity but little research has been carried out on the development of roads in this area (N. Ludlow *pers comm*). This map also shows the valleys to either side of the road to have been dotted with small farmsteads at this time.

At the time of the Tithe Survey in the 1840s, the land within the area was divided between the parishes of St Dogwells, Haycastle and Great Treffgarne and was held by the farms of West Ford, Nant y Coy Corn Mill, Dangraig and Danbach. The land on the upper slopes of Great Treffgarne Mountain was common land and crossed by various trackways and footpaths. That on the valley sides was divided into small, irregular enclosed fields. Nant y Coy Corn Mill (PRN 8919) and the associated mill pond and mill race to the west of it (PRN 17074) were probably built in the early nineteenth century although the earliest documentary reference to the name is from 1848 (Charles 1992, 662-3). The mill was last recorded by archaeologists from

RCAHMW in 1993 although these records were not accessible at the time of the assessment. It is also interesting to note that the most prominent Iron Age hilltop enclosure at Great Treffgarne Rocks stands at the junction of these three later parishes. This could be seen to suggest that this distinctive landscape feature has acted as a boundary marker for several millennia.

Later nineteenth century 1st and 2nd edition OS maps show the continued use of the land in this area for agricultural and industrial purposes. They record the location of weirs (PRNs 42380 and 42381) and footbridges (PRNs 42382 and 42383) along the Afon Cleddau and Nant y Coy Brook; the development of a series of quarries on both sides of Treffgarne Gorge (PRNs 42384, 42385, 42809 and 17715); and the position of two, elongated earthworks (PRNs 42810 and 42811) that may relate to some form of mineral extraction.

With specific reference to Treffgarne Bend, a tracing of the 1st edition OS map of 1887 shows a corridor of land that was purchased by Great Western Railway Company when the Haverfordwest to Fishguard line (PRN 42812) was constructed. This implies that Great Treffgarne Rocks was trimmed at this time to accommodate both the earlier road (the line of which was shifted to the west) and the new railway. The location of this work appears to coincide almost exactly with that of the proposed recutting of the A40.

## **The immediate archaeological impact (Fig. 2)**

### *Great Treffgarne Rocks hilltop enclosure*

The archaeology most immediately affected by the proposed recutting of the A40 at Treffgarne Bend would be the impressive later prehistoric hilltop enclosure of Great Treffgarne Rocks. This sits high upon Great Treffgarne Rocks, some 30m above the road and physically dominates the local landscape. It has been distinguished as being of national importance in view of its prominence in a landscape of smaller, contemporary enclosures and its fine state of preservation. It consists of an oval enclosure, c. 0.25ha in area which is defined by a single bank and ditch to the west, northwest and south and by Great Treffgarne Rocks themselves to the east. The bank stands to a height of 4m in places. At least one additional outer bank skirts its western side. The entrance probably lay to the south where there is a break in the bank.

The enclosure itself and the area that immediately surrounds it is protected by its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Pe248, see appendix). However, the protected area does not extend to include the eastern side of Great Treffgarne Rocks where the proposed realignment of the road would be cut. Following consultation with the CADW Ancient Monuments Inspector it is therefore suggested that the proposed work would not have a significant impact upon the archaeology.



## **Conclusion**

This review of the archaeological context of Treffgarne Bend has revealed that the site of the proposed work is in an area of great archaeological interest. The evidence is dominated by an unusual density of later prehistoric settlement enclosures. There is also potential for the discovery of evidence relating to medieval settlement and religious activity. Over the past two centuries the area has been more intensively farmed and quarried. This suggests that any significant groundworks here are likely to encounter evidence of prehistoric, medieval or later occupation.

The review of the immediate context of Treffgarne Bend place, shows that the proposed work runs very close to the site of the nationally important later prehistoric hilltop enclosure of Great Treffgarne Rocks. However, the corridor of road to be realigned lies outside the protected area that surrounds the monument and will be cut directly into the rock face. It is therefore unlikely to have any significant impact upon the archaeology. In addition, map evidence suggests that the base of Great Treffgarne Rocks at the site of the proposed work was in fact trimmed previously to accommodate a nineteenth century realignment of the road when the Great Western Railway was built to its east.

## **Recommendations**

It is therefore unlikely that any archaeological condition or consent would be required for the proposed recutting of the stretch of road at the base of Great Treffgarne Rocks. However the site does lie in an area of great archaeological potential it is therefore recommended that the Heritage Management Section of Cambria Archaeology should be informed if or when the work is to take place so that a visit could be made. This would ensure that any unforeseen impact upon the archaeology was properly identified and recorded.

## Appendix

### 1. Summary of archaeology within the study area

PRN	NGR	Name	Form	Period	Status
2400	SM 9525 2530	Great Treffgarne Rocks	Hilltop enclosure	Iron Age	SAM Pe428
2401	SM 9552 2511	Great Treffgarne Rocks	Open settlement	Iron Age	
2403	SM 9543 2525	Nant y Coy	Earthwork enclosure	Bronze/Iron Age	
2405	SM 962 250	Little Treffgarne	Religious site?	Medieval	
2463	SM 9608 2484	Little Treffgarne Camp	Earthwork enclosure	Iron Age	SAM Pe249
2470	SM 9541 2486	Maiden Castle	Hilltop enclosure?	Iron Age?	
8919	SM 9562 2525	Nant y Coy	Corn Mill	Post medieval	NPRN 40247
11260	SM 962 225	Little Treffgarne Mountain	Cropmark enclosure	Iron Age?	
12793	SM 9534 2525	Nant y Coy	Cropmark enclosure	Iron Age ?	
12890	SM 96 25	Treffgarn	Settlement	Medieval	
13821	SM 955 251	Great Treffgarne Mountain	Common land	Medieval	
17674	SM 9525 2530	Nant y Coy	Mill leat and pond	Post medieval	
17675	SM 9565 2530	Nant y Coy	Bridge	Post medieval	
17715	SM 9575 2485		Quarry	Post medieval	
42379	N/A	A40 Trunk Road	Road	Post medieval?	
42380	SM 9594 2469		Weir	Post medieval	
42381	SM 9600 2474		Weir	Post medieval	
42382	SM 9594 2475		Footbridge	Post medieval	
42383	SM 9534 2527		Footbridge	Post medieval	
42384	SM 9586 2483		Quarry	Post medieval	
42385	SM 9587 2487		Quarry	Post medieval	
42809	SM 9581 2492		Quarry	Post medieval	
42810	SM 9577 2545		Earthwork	Post medieval	
42811	SM 9603 2478		Earthwork	Post medieval	
42812	N/A		Railway	Post medieval	

### 2. Figures (see overleaf)

Figure 1 - Site location and archaeological context

Figure 2 - Area of immediate archaeological impact

Figure 3 - Aerial photograph showing cropmark sites and archaeological context

Figure 4 - Extract of map of 1887 showing section of rock trimmed for the construction of the Great Western Railway Line

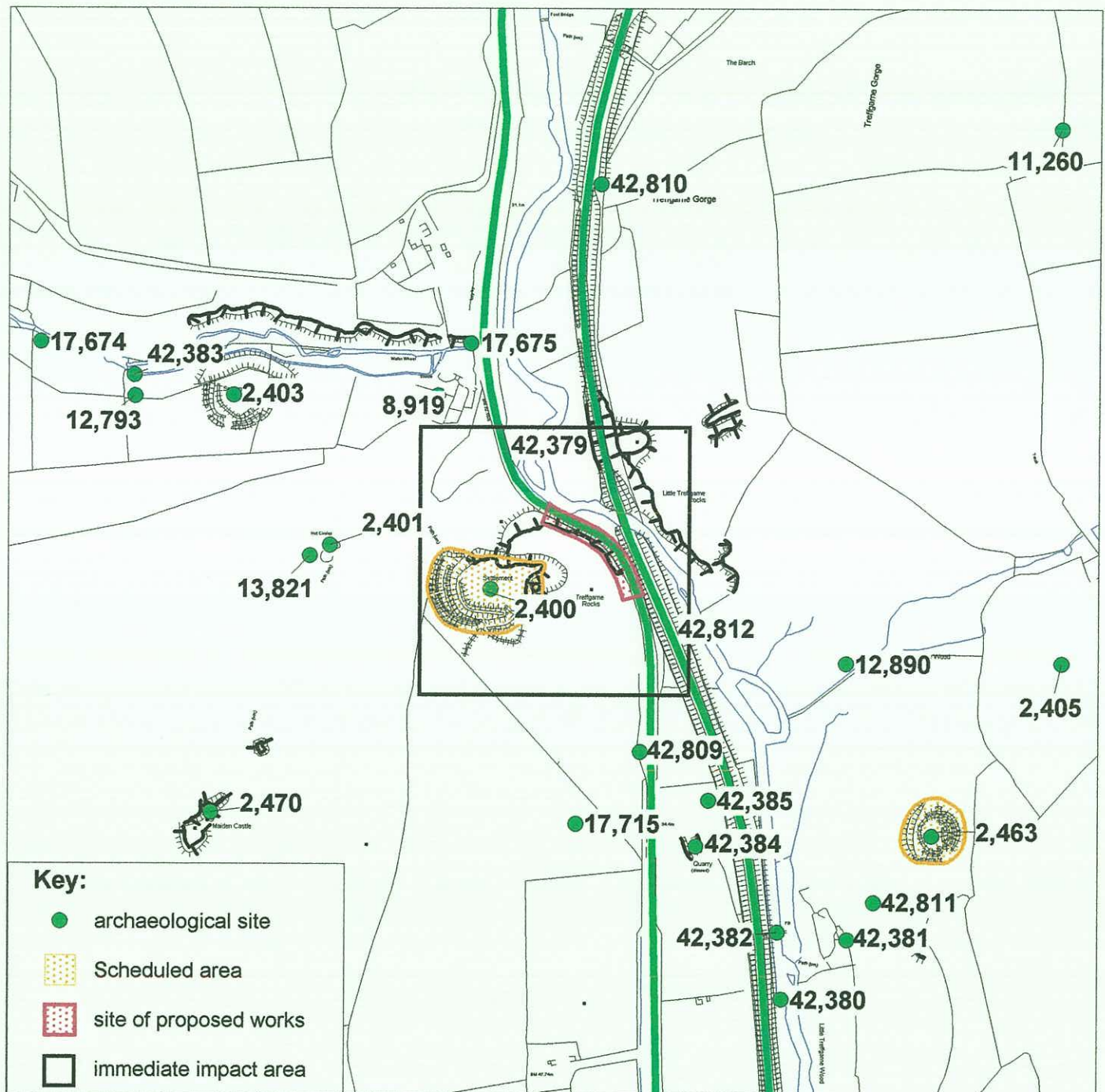


Figure 1 - Site location and archaeological context

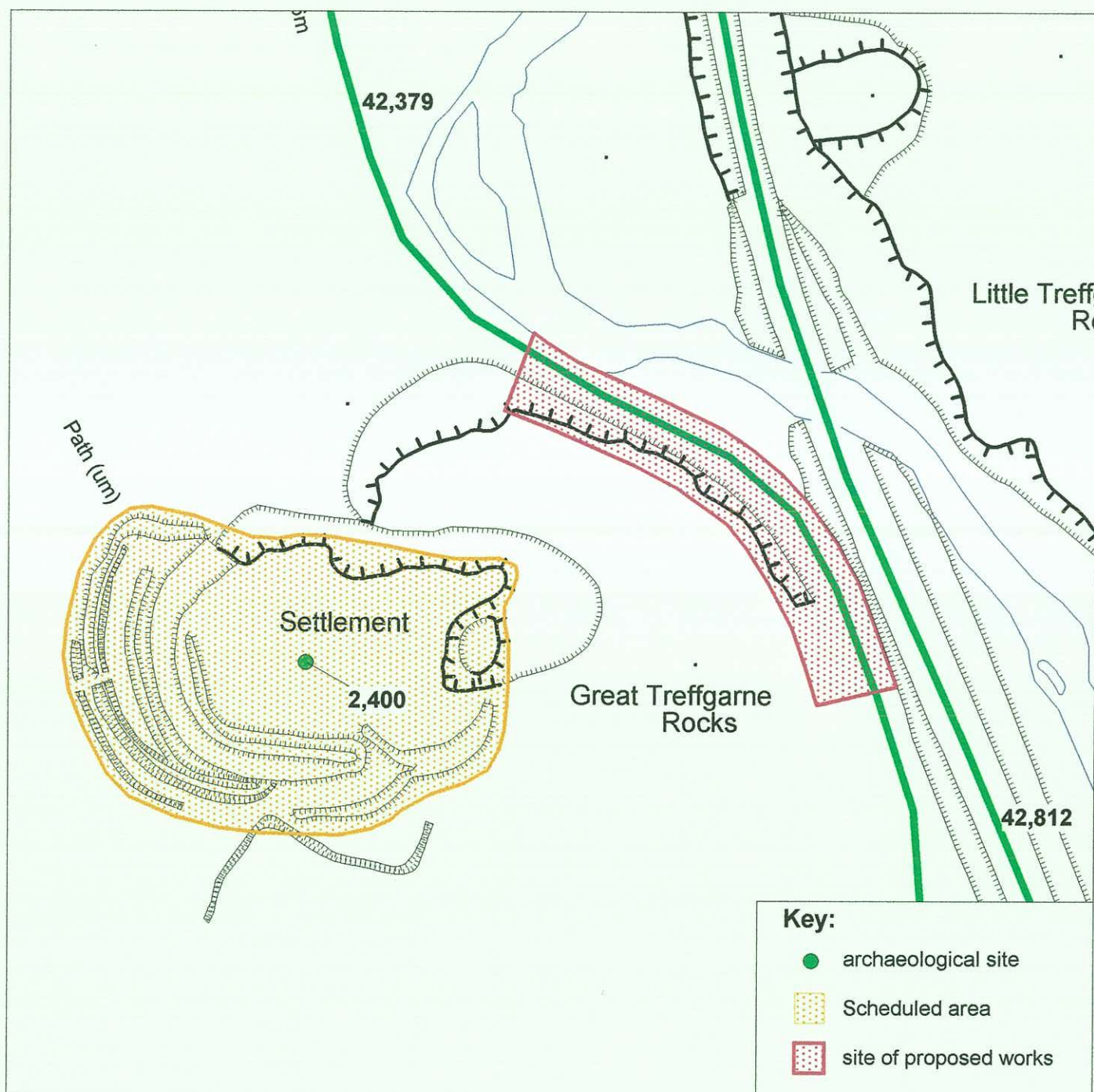


Figure 2 - Area of immediate archaeological impact





Figure 3 - Aerial photograph showing cropmark sites and archaeological context

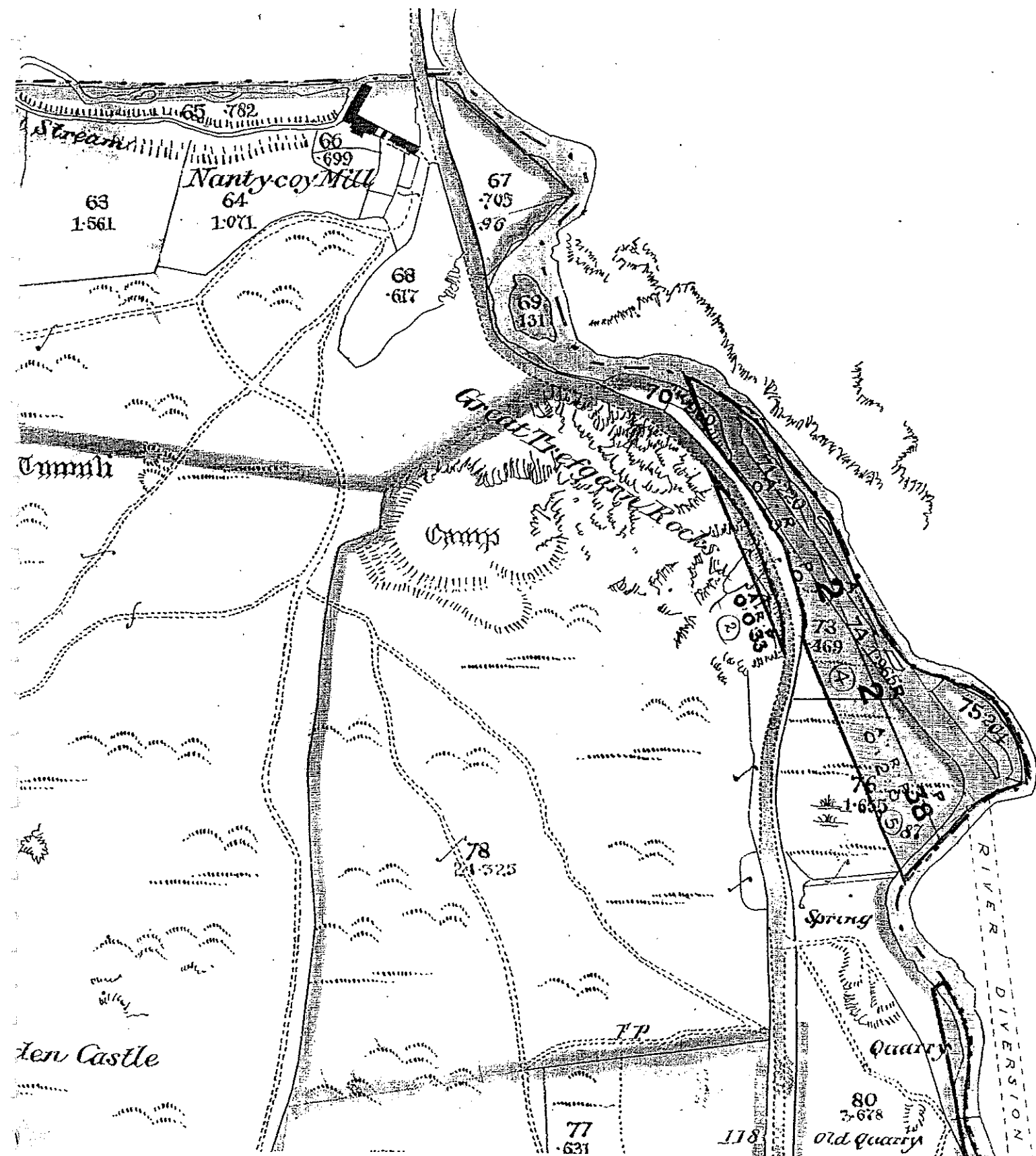


Figure 4 - Extract of map of 1887 showing lands conveyed to Great Western Railway in Treffgarne Parish

### **3.Sources consulted**

#### **Written description**

Charles BG (1992) *The place-names of Pembrokeshire, Volume II*, The National Library of Wales

RCAHMW (1925) *An Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions in Wales and Monmouthshire, Volume VII, County of Pembrokeshire*

Rees S (1992) *A Guide to Ancient and Historic Wales - Dyfed*, CADW, London HMSO

Rigg (1977) *The earthwork enclosures of Pembrokeshire, Group C - Treffgarne Group*

Rural Surveys Research Unit (1988) *The Common Lands of England and Wales, Pembrokeshire*

Williams G and Mytum H (1998) *Llawhaden, Dyfed - excavations on a small group of defended enclosures, 1980-4*, BAR British Series 275

#### **Map evidence**

(1810) OS Old Series surveyor's drawings, sheet IL, 1 inch: 1 mile

(1842) Tithe survey and apportionment, Hayscastle Parish

(1843) Tithe survey and apportionment, Great Treffgarne Parish

(1845) Tithe survey and apportionment, St Dogwells Parish

Philpott and Morgan (1865), *Plan of part of the Parish of Saint Dogwells in the County of Pembroke*, 8 chains: 1 inch, National Library of Wales, Williams and Williams 86 Map 7573 134/2/5

(1889) *Tracing from OS 25" 1st Edition showing lands conveyed to Great Western Railway in Treffgarne Parish*, 1:2500, National Library of Wales, Morgan Richardson Deposit No.18

(1891) 1st edition OS map Pembrokeshire sheet XVI SE, 1:10560

(1902) 2nd edition OS map Pembrokeshire sheet XVI SE, 1:10560

OS (1964) 1:10000 SM92NE/SE

#### **Aerial photographs**

Meridian Airmaps (1955), frame no. 10537

#### **Other sources**

*Sales Parties and Particulars, Little Treffgarne Estate* (1893)

#### **Other archaeological organisations**

CADW, Louise Mees, Ancient Monuments Inspector

RCAHMW, (temporarily closed for relocation)



#### 4. Extracts from CADW Scheduled Ancient Monument Records (Pe248 and 249)

##### SAM Pe248

Visit Date: 04/08/98

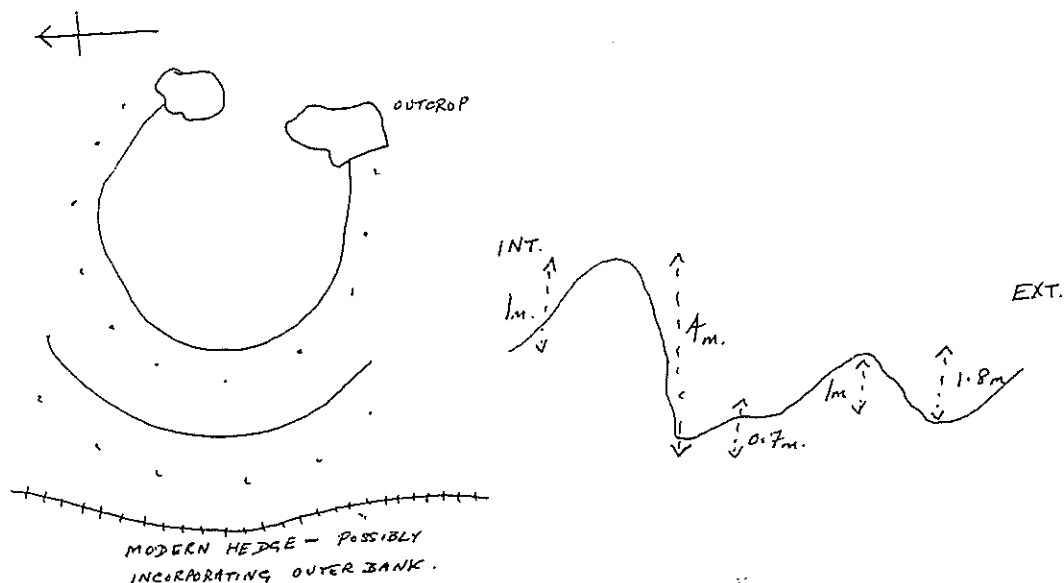
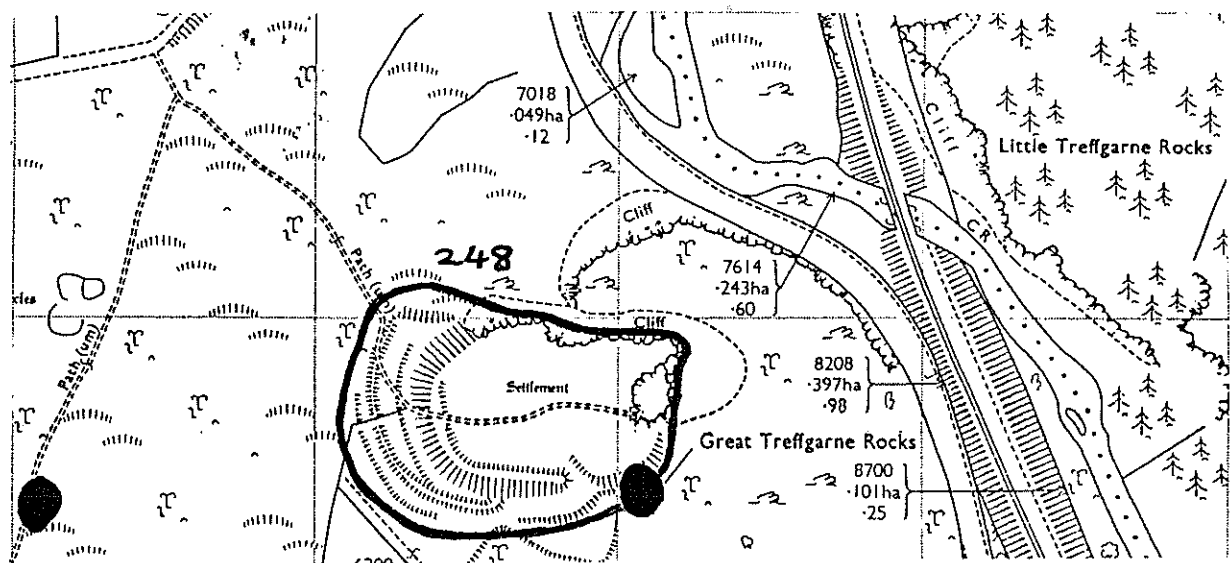
Visited By: Mees L

**Description Text:** The description of the monument is unchanged from previous visits.

The interior, banks and ditches are overgrown with bracken and some heather. There is some gorse on the banks.

A path winds its way across the defences on the W side, through the interior to Treffgarne Rocks outcrop. There is some erosion along this path - in places exposing underlying rocks - but generally it is in a stable condition.

The hillfort is in no apparent danger from agriculture, the primary threat is from visitor pressure. At present the hillfort is in a stable condition and is not suffering from erosion problems. The path through the interior is grassy, litter cut from the adjacent vegetation is providing some protection to the ground surface.



SAM Pe249

Little Treffgarne Camp, St. Dogwells

Pembs No: 249

FILE NO. 82013

SITE (GRID REF.) SM 961248

7463

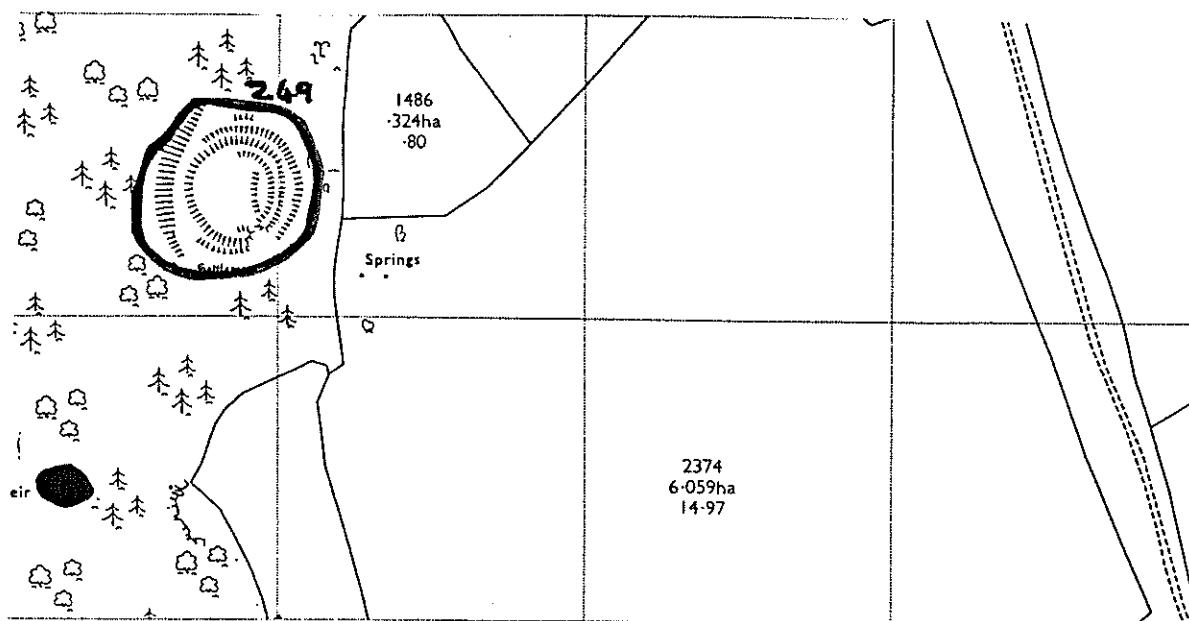
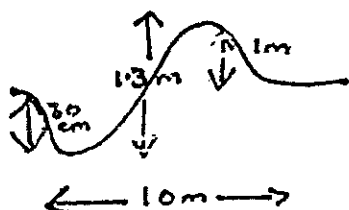
Visit Date: 04/09/98

Visited By: Mees L

**Description Text:** Little Treffgarne Camp is surrounded by forestry. The description of the site is unchanged from previous visits.

The interior of the site is now completely overgrown with brambles and inaccessible, the brambles extending to the banks.

The severe shading of the fir plantation (grandis?) renders the ground bare, save for fallen needles, on the rest of the site. The trees have been planted on the northern side on the counterscarp bank and some in the ditch. A footpath marker has been inserted into the ground on the SE corner, this may be just within the scheduled area.



## 5. Plates



Plate 1 - The approach to Treffgarne Bend from the north



Plate 2 - Treffgarne Bend from the west, showing the section of rock to be trimmed to the right





Plate 3 - The approach to Treffgarne from the south



Plate 4 - Treffgarne Bend from the southeast, showing the section of rock to be trimmed to the left

## **6. Archive deposition**

Three copies of the report have been deposited with WS Atkins Consultants Limited. A further copy has been deposited in the Sites and Monuments Record at Cambria Archaeology, Llandeilo.