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# THE CORONATION HALL, PUMPSAINT

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Report No. 2002/93

Report Prepared for:  
THE CORONATION HALL COMMITTEE



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2002/93  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 46584

NOVEMBER 2002

THE CORONATION HALL, PUMPSAINT

By

Nigel Page

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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyfiredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Eboost: cambria@acadat.com Gwefan: www.acadat.com

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited  
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF  
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121  
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131  
Fax: 01558 823133  
Email: cambria@acadat.com Website: www.acadat.com

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## **CORONATION HALL, PUMPSAINT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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## SUMMARY

*Plans to construct an extension on the rear Coronation Hall, Pumpsaint (PRN 29656; NGR SN65654055), to house new changing rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities required an archaeological watching brief. The watching brief was required because the hall lies within the Pumpsaint Roman Fort (PRN 1956), which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Carm226), although the hall itself lies outside the scheduled area. The Coronation Hall Committee commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out the watching brief.*

*Previous archaeological investigations within the fort had suggested that a roadside ditch may extend into the watching brief area. However the area at the rear of the hall had been heavily disturbed in the past by several episodes of extension and drainage works between the 1950s and 1970s, which has apparently removed any deposits associated with the Roman fort.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PROJECT COMMISSION**

Proposals to construct new changing rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities at the Coronation Hall, Pumpsaint (NGR SN65654055), required an archaeological watching brief. The watching brief was required because the hall lies within the Pumpsaint Roman Fort (PRN 1956), which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Carm226). The Coronation Hall Committee commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out the watching brief.

### **1.2 SCOPE OF PROJECT**

The watching brief was carried out on the site stripping and excavation of the foundation trenches for the new extension. This report was prepared based on the fieldwork results.

### **1.3 REPORT OUTLINE**

This report describes the physical environment of the site (Section 2) before outlining the watching brief results and the conclusions (Section 3).

### **1.4 ABBREVIATIONS**

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).

Archaeological features and contexts will be referred to using the open-ended numbering system (e.g. *001*; *010*; *100*) employed by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations.

## 2. THE SITE

### 2.1 LOCATION

The Coronation Hall (PRN 29656; NGR SN65654055) lies towards the centre of the village of Pumpsaint and is of corrugated zinc construction with several extension blocks on the rear. The hall is located within the known boundaries of the Roman fort, but outside the scheduled area.

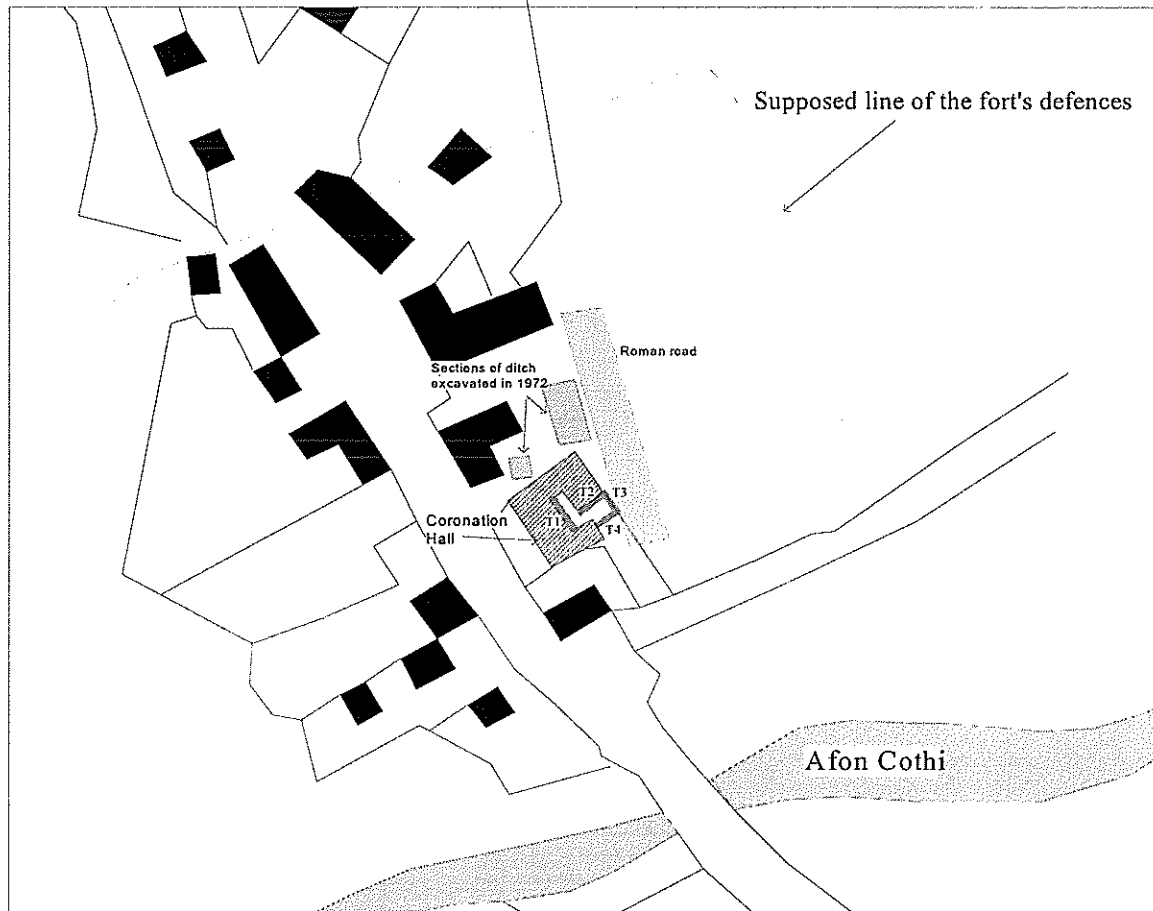


Figure 1: location plan showing watching brief trenches and some previously excavated feature

### 3. THE WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

#### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

The construction works required the levelling of an area between existing structures and the excavation of four new foundation trenches (T 1-4) to the rear of the hall (Fig 1). The levelling was carried out using a toothless grading bucket and the trenches were excavated using a 0.6m wide toothed bucket, which formed the width of the trenches. The new foundation trenches were 0.5-0.65m deep.

#### 3.2 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

A number of investigations have been carried out within the fort at Pumpsaint, ranging from large-scale research excavations undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s and several watching briefs (see for example Jones and Little 1974; Murphy 1995). For the most part the excavations have been confined to the western half of the fort, but small trial trenches were excavated in 1972 just north of the hall at the rear of the old cart house, now the visitor centre building. Those trenches revealed evidence of two ditches and a road, all aligned roughly north-south (Fig 1). The lines of both ditches appeared to extend under the hall building and the project line of the easternmost ditch would have passed through the watching brief area.

#### 3.3 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Grading the area between the existing structures revealed nothing of archaeological interest.

*T1* was positioned along the rear of the east wall of the original hall, built in 1902, and revealed its rubble stone foundations. The edge of the foundation trench for the 1902 hall was visible in the north end of Trench 1, below a 1950s extension block. The east side of Trench 1 was unstable as it was cut through modern made-up material, which contained a plastic coat hanger. A number of medium and large stones were uncovered towards the southern end of Trench 1, but these appeared to have been dumped sometime during the construction of the hall, or during the many episodes of later extension works.

*T2* was excavated along the base of the south wall of a 1950s extension to the hall. The rubble stone foundations for the extension were revealed. This area had been disturbed in the past by modern drainage works, which included the insertion of new drains and a soakaway. Cleaning the south section of the trench revealed layer of loose brown clayey loam, which contained some large loose stones, overlying a layer of light brown clay, with some gravel, which contained very occasional charcoal flecks. This in turn overlay a layer of mixed brown/grey/green clay and small to medium-sized stone blocks and shale, which may have been derived from the fort's rampart material.

A modern feature containing loose loam, small stones and plastic pipe fragments cut the section at the east end of this trench. This did not appear to extend into the other trenches and was presumably part of the extension or drainage works.

*T3* extended south from the end of the 1950s extension and revealed a stratigraphic sequence similar to *Trench 2*: a sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century blue transfer printed ware was recovered from the base of the trench.

*T4* ran west from the south end of *T3* to the east wall of a 1970s toilet block extension. A modern drain cut across the western end of this trench.

### 3.4 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief revealed that the area to the rear of the hall had been heavily disturbed in the past during several episodes of extension and drainage works. In other areas of the fort the Roman layers are close to the present ground surface and survive in good condition, often to some considerable depth. Previous work had suggested the possibility of a roadside ditch running through the watching brief area (Jones and Little 1974, 16 – Fig.1). However, the confined area of the watching brief, the small size of the trenches and the disturbed nature of the deposits, including the presence of a sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery towards the base of *Trench 3*, meant that no features or deposits, that could definitely be associated with the Roman fort were observed.



Plate 1: Trench 2 showing the footings for one of the 1950s extension blocks.



## **APPENDIX ONE: 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.
- D.** Site photographs – digital images.
- E.** Finds catalogue, individual finds record and finds report.
- I.** Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

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

The archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 46584.

## REFERENCES

### Published sources

Jones G B D    1974    'Excavations at Pumpsaint 1973: interim report'. The  
& Little J H            *Carmarthenshire Antiquary* **10**, 3-17.

### Unpublished sources

Murphy K        1995    *Watermains renewal at Pumpsaint, Carmathenshire:  
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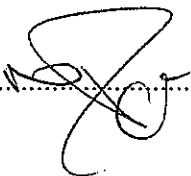
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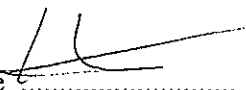
This report has been prepared by Nigel Page

Position Project Manager

Signature  Date 20/11/02

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

Position Principal Archaeologist - Field Operations

Signature  Date 20/11/02

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