

CARDIGAN TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT



Report No. 2004/113
Project Record No. 52843

Report Prepared for:
EASTONFIELD HOLDINGS

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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By

Nigel Page

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REPORT NUMBER 2004/113

December 2004

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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

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CARDIGAN TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

Plans for redeveloping a large area in the centre of Cardigan are currently being drawn up by Eastonfield Holdings, Holywell. The proposed development, at SN17844607, lies within the historic core of the town – which was first established during the early 12th century – and straddles the eastern line of the medieval town wall, which was built to. The section of the town wall that falls within the area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The proposed development site also includes the modern Chancery Lane, which is thought to have been the industrial area of the medieval town, and Pwllhai, a former wet area that lay outside the town wall. Pwllhai was drained and developed largely during the 18th and 19th centuries as Cardigan expanded beyond the confines of the medieval walled town.

Previous work in Cardigan has shown that parts of the medieval town wall survive within the proposed development site. This assessment has further highlighted the archaeological potential of the area, which includes possible medieval industrial remains, surviving stretches of the medieval town wall, potential palaeoenvironmental evidence from waterlogged deposits in Pwllhai and evidence of the 18th and 19th century expansion of the town.

A programme of further evaluation through archaeological trial trenching has been recommended.



Plate 1: a view of the northern ends of Pwllhai (on the left) and chancery lane (to the right of Woolworth's), looking across the site of the medieval Bartholomew Gate.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT PROPOSALS AND COMMISSION

Plans are currently being proposed by Eastonfield Holdings, Holywell, for the redevelopment of a large area (c.0.5ha) of Cardigan town centre (centred on SN17844607). The plans include the demolition of several standing buildings and construction of new retail premises. The proposed development site lies within the historic core of the town and across the line of the medieval town wall – a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No.Cd141). It also includes an area thought to have been an industrial area during the medieval period and former wet boggy area outside the medieval town.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

This assessment addressed the likely implications of the proposed redevelopment on the known and potential archaeological resource through the examination of existing cartographic and documentary sources. The assessment should be regarded as the beginning of a phased programme of archaeological works devised to mitigate as far as is possible the impacts of the scheme.

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). Suggestions for further archaeological work are given in Section 5.

1.4 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

All sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). References to primary cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources are given in parenthesis throughout the text and listed in full towards the rear of the report.

2. THE STUDY AREA

2.1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The area being proposed for redevelopment covers c.0.5ha of Cardigan town centre. Its boundaries are formed by Chancery Lane on its west side, Priors Street along its northern edge, Morgan Street to the east and St. Mary's Street on its south side.

The north end of Pwllhai falls 3-4m in its first 30-40m, as it drops over the break of slope that defined the edge of the walled town, before it levels out to cross what was a wet area in the medieval and early post-medieval periods (*pwll* = pool). Chancery Lane drops steadily along its length from north to south. The proposed development site is on two levels with the western, Chancery Lane area up to 4m higher than the adjacent Pwllhai. It was along this very evident break of slope that the medieval town walls was constructed (Fig. 1; Plate 2).

There are a several businesses operating within the area, but there are quite a large number of open spaces, which are for the most part used as car parks. Neither Pwllhai nor Chancery Lane are regularly used by visitors to the town, which has led to them becoming slightly marginalised.



Figure 1: Location plan showing extent of medieval walled town (thick black line), the approximate area of the scheduled section of the wall (thick green line), the proposed development area (red shaded area) and known archaeological features within and close to the development area (red stars).

2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN

The town of Cardigan was established sometime around 1110 (Lewis 1990, 1) and by 1136 it contained the castle, churches, houses and a bridge over the Afon Teifi (Griffiths 1990, 101). Following a prolonged period of unrest, the town was defended by stone walls during the middle of the 13th century (Soulsby 1983, 99; Murphy and O'Mahoney 1985, 192; Griffiths 1990, 110), enclosing an area of approximately 4ha. It is thought that the stone wall may have replaced earlier earthen defences, although these may not have enclosed the same area or followed the same course (James 1983, 336). No evidence has been recovered for any earlier defences within the town (Griffiths 1990, 98), however, only a relatively small amount of archaeological excavation has taken place within Cardigan.



Plate 2: A view north along the line of the medieval town wall as it runs south from Woolworth's (the red-brick building). The present wall is modern, but it may sit on the buried remains of the medieval town wall.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

3.1 KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES WITHIN THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

There are five known archaeological features within, or on the edges of the proposed development site (Table 1). Four of the features are connected with the medieval town wall and include, the eastern line of the wall (PRN 8371), part of a mural tower (PRN 13164) and the northern (PRN 13165) and eastern (PRN 13169) town gates. A post-medieval well and pump (PRN 8980) are also present in the rear garden of No. 7 St. Mary's Street (see Fig. 1 for locations).

3.1.1 The town walls (PRN 8371 – SAM Cd. 141))

There are no definite sections of the town walls remaining above ground, although excavation at the rear of Woolworth's revealed buried medieval masonry of the eastern wall (James 1983), which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM Cd. 141). In this area the rear boundary of the properties along the east side of Chancery Lane follow the line of the medieval wall and in places the present wall, which is not considered to be medieval (information from Cadw Scheduled Ancient Monument site visit form – copy held in SMR), has been built using the surviving medieval masonry as a foundation. A photographic and drawn survey of the above ground wall was carried out in the late 1990s (Crane 1998), which emphasised the siting of the medieval town wall, along the break of slope of a pronounced plateau (Plate 2).

3.1.2 The medieval mural tower (PRN 13164)

A short section of medieval masonry was exposed at the rear of Woolworth's in 1978, which was interpreted as part of the foundation for a tower shown on John Speed's map of the town published in 1610 (James 1983, 3341). The wall had been truncated by the construction of the existing wall sometime in the post-medieval period and it is not known how much, if anything, survives of the rest of the tower.

3.1.3 Bartholomew Gate (PRN 13165)

Bartholomew Gate was the northern town gate and it straddled High Street somewhere between the junction of High Street and Chancery Lane and the northwest end of Pwllhai. The gate was listed in a survey of the town carried out in 1300 (James 1983, 336) and shown on John Speed's map. There are no above ground traces of this gate and it is not how much if anything survives below ground (see Plate 1).

3.1.4 Wolf Gate (PRN 13169)

Wolf Gate was the eastern town gate and it straddled St. Mary's Street, possibly between numbers 9 and 43 St. Mary's Street. The gate was listed in a survey of the town carried out in 1300 (James 1983, 336) and shown on John Speed's map. There are no above ground traces of this gate and it is not known how much if anything survives below ground. Its location lies on the southern edge of the proposed development site.

3.1.5 Post-medieval well and pump (PRN 8980)

A well, with the remains of square section pipe were recorded in the rear garden of 7 St. Mary's Street, which is a Listed Building Grade II*. The well was sealed below flagstones and garden soil. After reporting the well, the owners were advised to recover it with the flagstones and soil (information from the site record form in the SMR). This site now appears to lie under a tarmac car park area and its current condition is unknown.

3.2 POTENTIAL BURIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The proposed development area has enormous potential to contain buried archaeological remains dating from the medieval period onwards. The interests may range from the industrial use of Chancery Lane during the medieval period, the apparent decline and abandonment of the medieval buildings, to understanding the nature and extent of 19th and early 20th century occupation of both Chancery Lane and Pwllhai. The street front areas of Chancery Lane and Pwllhai are particularly sensitive areas and they may contain substantial surviving evidence of the previous occupation and use of these parts of the town.

3.2.1 Chancery Lane

Chancery Lane was formerly the industrial region of the town, and even though this area is largely vacant today, it was once fairly heavily populated, probably with houses and workshops along both sides of the street (see Appendix 1 below for a discussion of the medieval development of this area).

The east side of Chancery Lane is today occupied by two car parks, Woolworth's, a public toilet and a small brick-built building constructed between 1890 and 1906 (Plate 3). A former garage block, which fronted the street along the front of the present Black Lion Inn carpark were demolished in the 1970s. The west, front, wall of the carpark has blocked openings visible, which appear to be the former garage doors (Plate 4). The present car park is *c.* 1m below the level of Chancery Lane, but it is not certain whether the car park area has been reduced, the level of Chancery Lane has been raised or a combination of the two.

3.2.2 Pwllhai

Pwllhai was a wet area outside the town walls during the medieval period that became gradually drained and settled during the post-medieval and early modern periods. By the later 19th century Pwllhai was fairly well settled with 34 houses along its length (Lewis 1990, 86), although today there are only one or two left. Prior to its draining and development Pwllhai would have been regarded as a marginal area, probably used primarily as a dump, and its development is evidence of the rapid growth of the town that occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Therefore, it has the potential to contain palaeoenvironmental evidence, such as pollen, plant remains and insect remains, relating to the growth of the town. In addition, it may also have acted as a dumping ground for the town and therefore may

contain a substantial artefact record of the material culture used and discarded by the town's inhabitants.

Some of the standing buildings within Pwllhai date from at least the early 19th century – many are shown on the parish tithe map (1842 – Fig. 3), and the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map (1890 – Fig. 4) – although they may be significantly older in origin.



Plate 3: Brick-built building on east side of Chancery Lane. This building was constructed sometime between 1890 and 1906. A small horseshoe tacked to the door suggests that this was a stable at sometime.



Plate 4: The west wall of the Black Lion Inn car park showing the blocked openings, probably from a row of garages demolished in the 1970s. Chancery Lane lies behind the wall and the concrete layer at the bottom of the brick quoins marks the current street level.

3.3 KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES CLOSE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA

There are many important post-medieval buildings close to the proposed development area, some of which may contain surviving earlier features.

Table 1: archaeological features within the proposed development area

PRN	NGR (SN)	NAME	PERIOD	TYPE	COMMENTS
8371	177460	Cardigan Town Defences	Medieval	Town Walls	Stone walls built to surround the town during the mid-13 th century. The stretch of wall within the development site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
8980	17824603		Post-medieval	Pump	A well with surviving pump in the garden of No.7 St. Mary's Street.
13164	17814611	Mural Tower	Medieval	Mural Tower	A mural tower shown on John Speed's map of Cardigan (1610). A watching brief in 1978 revealed a short stretch of wall from this tower (James 1983, 341).
13165	17774614	Bartholomew Gate	Medieval	Town Gate	The northern gate of the medieval walled town. The gate was shown on John Speed's map of Cardigan (1610). It stood on High Street and its location is thought to be just north of the junction of Chancery Lane and High Street.
13169	17834602	Wolf Gate	Medieval	Town Gate	The eastern gate of the walled town. The gate was shown on John Speed's map of Cardigan (1610). It straddled what is now St. Mary's Street and its location has been suggested as between Nos. 9 and 43 St. Mary's Street (James 1983, 336).

Table 2: Archaeological features within c.50m of the proposed development area

PRN	NGR (SN)	NAME	PERIOD	TYPE	COMMENTS
6486	17854601	Angel Inn	Post-medieval	Public house	Listed Building Grade II
6487	17854601	Avondale	Post-medieval	Dwelling	Listed Building Grade II*
6492	17884612	Broyan House	Post-medieval	Dwelling	Listed Building Grade II
6496	17804600	Teifi House	Post-medieval	Dwelling	
6498	17754605	Black Lion	Post-medieval	Public house	Listed Building Grade II
25745	17834600	No. 43 St. Mary's Street	Post-medieval	Dwelling	Listed Building Grade II

4. POTENTIAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED SCHEME ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

4.1 THE MEDIEVAL TOWN WALLS

Previous excavation has revealed that some medieval masonry from the town wall survives below ground, although at present it is not certain how much survives, nor whether it is continuous along the length of the site. However, it is possible that much of the present wall is founded on medieval masonry. The wall line along the rear of the Black Lion Inn carpark and the adjacent car park at the rear of No. 7 St. Mary's Street is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is therefore protected by law from all disturbance, unless that disturbance is accompanied by Scheduled Monument Consent.

The potential survival of medieval masonry and the Scheduled status of the wall must be considered in any final design plans for this part of the site.

4.2 CHANCERY LANE

The eastern side of Chancery lane is likely to be almost completely developed during this scheme. The potential for medieval remains, particularly along the street front, is unknown at present as it is not clear how much the area has been truncated during the post-medieval period or, more significantly, during the modern period (see 3.2.1 above).

This has implications for the survival of any buried remains and, therefore, it is critical that this issue is resolved in order to assess the archaeological potential of this area.

4.3 PWLLHAI

This area will be almost totally redeveloped during the proposed scheme and it is unlikely that any of the existing buildings will be retained. Some of these buildings date from at least the first half of the 19th century and could be significantly older, with others dating from the later 19th and early 20th century.

Any surviving below ground remains of earlier buildings or evidence of earlier activity may also be affected by the proposals. The below ground evidence may include palaeoenvironmental material and artefacts contained within waterlogged conditions in what used to be a wet marginal area outside the town walls.

5. SUGGESTED FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

5.1 EVALUATING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The archaeological potential of the Chancery Lane and Pwllhai area has been outlined above and more archaeological work is required to fully assess the likely implications of the proposed development.

Therefore, it is recommended that a programme of archaeological trial trenching be carried out to assess the presence, extent, character and potential of any surviving archaeological remains across the proposed development site. This will include evaluating the extent and survival of the medieval town wall.

Trial trenching should be undertaken in all accessible areas within the proposed development site. The exact number of trenches and their final locations¹ should be determined following discussions between the archaeological project manager, the regional archaeological curator and representatives of Eastonfield Holdings.

5.2 RECORDING THE KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

It is likely that many, if not all, of the standing buildings in Pwllhai will be demolished (see 4.3 above).

Therefore, it is recommended that a programme of standing building recording be carried out on those buildings to be demolished or altered during the proposed development.

The buildings to be recorded and the levels of recording should be determined following discussions between the archaeological project manager, the regional archaeological curator and representatives of Eastonfield Holdings.

¹ The final trench locations will be affected by the existence of services and other physical constraints typically encountered in an urban environment.

APPENDIX ONE: HISTORY OF THE SITE

CARDIGAN TOWN: MEDIEVAL ORIGINS

The origins of the town of Cardigan are inextricably tied to the development and history of the castle, which was constructed on its present site by the early 12th century. There are sources to suggest that a town had possibly developed around the current castle by about 1110 (Lewis 1990, 1) and there is clear evidence that it had developed by 1136, when the town was ransacked and many of its inhabitants killed following the Battle of Crug Mawr. At that time Cardigan contained the castle, houses, at least one church and a wooden bridge over the Afon Teifi (Griffiths 1990, 101).

Throughout the 12th century the castle was constantly changing hands between the Welsh and Anglo-Normans. It may have seen as many as sixteen changes of occupier in as little as 150 years (Kramer 1972, 56) and most, if not all, of these episodes would have resulted in significant damage to the town. For, example, in 1145 Cardigan was ‘mauled’ (Griffiths 1990, 101) and in 1231 the town was burnt ‘to the gate of the castle’ and the bridge destroyed (Lewis 1990, 3; Griffiths 1990, 109).

Therefore, it is not surprising that when the castle returned to virtually unbroken Anglo-Norman control in the 13th century the town was defended by the construction of stone walls (Soulsby 1983, 99; Murphy and O’Mahoney 1985, 192; Griffiths 1990, 110).

Despite its rather unstable early history the town continued to develop around the castle and in the mid 12th century, perhaps its most dynamic and dangerous period, there were identifiable properties, with three belonging to Roger de Clare, earl of Hereford (Griffiths 1990, 101). A town survey of 1300 records 130 burgages, some of which were in the extra mural development that had grown up around the priory (James 1983, 336). In 1301-2, twenty-one burgesses were permitted to trade in the town (Sanders 1959, 320).

The exact topography and layout of medieval Cardigan are unclear, but some streets are known to have been in existence, for instance High Street, Quay Street and Chancery Lane. Also St. Mary’s Street was probably developed during the medieval period following the establishment of the priory. Excavation on the corner of High Street and Quay Street revealed evidence of medieval activity, which was interpreted as being ‘more in keeping with the rear of a building plot’ (Maynard 1975, 350). The excavator suggested that this may indicate ‘a street system later rearranged to the present one’ (Maynard 1975, 350).

The town walls

In 1250, when the castle was granted by the King to Robert Waleran, over £400 was assigned to build a new keep and to surround the town with a stone wall (Murphy and O’Mahoney 1985, 192). However, it seems likely that the town walls were probably started during the 1240s when the castle came into the possession of Gilbert Marshal, earl of Pembroke, who sent his brother Walter to oversee the rebuilding and strengthening of the castle and its defences.

It has been suggested that the stone walls may have replaced earlier earthen defences, although these may not necessarily have enclosed the same area or followed the same line (James 1983, 336). No evidence has yet been recovered for any earlier defences (Griffiths 1990, 98), however, this may be due to the lack of archaeological excavation that has taken place within the town itself. The first cartographic evidence for the town, John Speed's map of 1610, gives the earliest pictorial evidence for the line of the town walls, which enclosed an area now defined by the castle wall, the line of the rear of the properties on the east side of Chancery Lane, the junction of Pwllhai and High Street, Mwldan on the west side and the bottom of Bridge Street on the south (see Fig. 1).

Speed's map shows how the line of the walls follows a natural break in slope, with the enclosed town occupying a small plateau, which was confirmed by the excavation of a small length of the medieval wall at the rear of Woolworth's in 1978 (James 1978; James 1983).

Inside the walled town Souters Street – now Chancery Lane – was shown by Speed, although on his map it appears to have been undeveloped, however, in 1301 'there were more people living in Chancery Lane than in High Street' (Father Cunane, text of a letter to the Cardigan and Tivyside Advertiser, 2004 – copy held in the SMR). In correspondence with the local press regarding earlier proposals to develop the Pwllhai area, the eminent local historian Father Cunane has described how Souters Lane was probably a corruption of the Latin Sutor, meaning a cobbler. In medieval Latin this came to mean anybody that hammered, including leather metal and wood (Father Cunane, letter to the Cardigan and Tivyside Advertiser, 1994 – copy held in the SMR). This indicated that the Chancery Lane area was formerly the industrial region of the town, and even though this area is largely vacant today, it was once fairly heavily populated, probably with houses and workshops along both sides of the street.

POST-MEDIEVAL GROWTH

A survey of 1565 into the conditions of the ports, creeks and landing places in Wales recorded fifty five households in the town (Kramer 1972, 58), this number had risen by 1610, when it was depicted on the town map produced by John Speed. The map shows the High Street and Church Street, now St. Mary's Street, fully developed, as was the area around the castle and Quay Street. Also clearly depicted is the extra-mural development around St. Mary's Priory to the east of the town. Speed's map shows the Pwllhai area – marked as 'Pole Hey' on the map – as a watery wet hollow between the eastern town wall and the west side of Feidrfair, which had been partially developed at its southern end.

The walled town continued to form the core of Cardigan until well into the post-medieval period, when the town expanded beyond the confines of the medieval town and into new areas to the east and north (Lewis and Wheatley 1998, 213).

EARLY MODERN PERIOD: CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

Most of Cardigan's surviving buildings are the result of the continued growth of the town during 18th and 19th centuries, although many have earlier origins and may retain

some original features. In 1803 Sir Richard Colt-Hoare described the town as being one of the ‘neatest in Wales’ (Thompson (Ed.) 1983, 227), but surveys of the mid and later 19th century described what appear to have been fairly squalid conditions in some parts of the town.

By the time Samuel Lewis visited the town in the early 19th century the town had expanded and been redeveloped so much that he reported ‘of the walls by which the town was anciently encompassed there are now no remains’ (Lewis 1833). Clearly they had been demolished, robbed for their stone or incorporated into later buildings by the later 18th or early 19th century.

Pwllhai

Until the late 19th century, Pwllhai was one of the main routes into the town from the east, although it was a ‘narrow, crooked and inconvenient thoroughfare’ (Lewis 1990, 89). It was so inconvenient that in 1871 the Rev. P J Miles constructed Priory Street, originally called Parade Street (Lewis 1990, 89), in order to facilitate better access to the town. This appears to have led to a general decline in the state and status of Pwllhai, and in a survey of 1873 it was described as having ‘34 houses, 19 without privies and 30 without water’, also many heaps of manure were reported and ‘some had been there so long it was fermenting’ (Lewis 1990, 86).

From that point it appears that Pwllhai has had a fairly marginal role in the town and in 1994 it was described as consisting of a veterinary surgery, several retail and hire businesses and various ad-hoc car parking areas (Ceredigion County Council 1994, 51). This type of liminal area within towns frequently become earmarked for redevelopment or regeneration, and the Pwllhai area was highlighted as long ago as 1994 as a potential redevelopment site (Ceredigion County Council 1994, 51).

Chancery Lane

The origins of Chancery Lane have been discussed above, but the apparent discrepancy between the level of settlement recorded in 1301 and the lack of development shown on Speed’s 1610 map are perhaps explained as part of a widespread decline of Welsh towns during the 14th and early 15th centuries (Murphy 2000). Archaeological evaluation along the east side of the street frontage of Chancery Lane may well provide evidence of the medieval and later occupation of the street.

In the town survey of 1873 Chancery Lane was described as consisting of:

‘7 houses and premises; only 1 had a privy and water. The sewer smelt horribly. Large quantities of manure were kept there, especially on the premises of Councillor Parker who would be glad to get rid of it. The drainage water finds its way into the Golden Lion cellar’ (Lewis 1990, 86).

Again there is a discrepancy between the recorded level of occupation of Chancery Street in 1301 and that recorded in 1873, reinforcing the idea that parts of the street were abandoned sometime after the early 14th century. In the 16th century the survey of ports and creeks revealed that as well as the fifty five households (see above) there

were 'more decayed and late habitations' (Griffiths 1990, 124). This supports the idea of the decline and abandonment of properties along Chancery Lane.



Plate 5: general view north along Chancery Lane.

Figure 2: John Speed's map of Cardigan, 1610.

Figure 3: Extract from the Cardigan St. Mary's parish tithe map, 1842.

*Cardigan town centre development
archaeological desk-based assessment*

Figure 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500 map (sheet Cards.XXXVIII.5).

APPENDIX TWO: 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 – digital (CD).
- 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 Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as Project Record Number 52843.

SOURCES

CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Tithe map

1846 – Cardigan St. Mary’s parish

Ordnance Survey

1890 – 1st edition 1:2500 Cardiganshire sheets XXXVIII.5

1906 – 2nd edition 1:2500 Cardiganshire sheets XXXVIII.5

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