

A WATCHING BRIEF AT THE DRAGON LNG FLARESTACK SITE, WATERSTONE PEMBROKESHIRE

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Paratowyd gan Archaeoleg Cambria
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A WATCHING BRIEF AT THE DRAGON LNG FLARESTACK SITE WATERSTONE, PEMBROKESHIRE

Gan / By

Duncan Schlee

*Archaeoleg Cambria yw enw marchnata Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyfyngedig.
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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ffacs: 01558 823133
Ebost: cambria@cambria.org.uk Gwefan:
www.cambria.org.uk

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@cambria.org.uk Website:
www.cambria.org.uk

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HUGHES BA FSA MIFA

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Figure 1: Location of flare stack site to known Bronze Age features

Photo 1: Natural feature before excavation (looking west)

Photo 2: Natural feature after excavation (looking west)

Photo 3: View of excavation (looking east)

1.0 SUMMARY

Recent excavations in advance of the construction of liquid natural gas storage tanks at Newton, Pembrokeshire (SM 930 049), revealed the post-ring of a Bronze Age roundhouse about 5.8m in diameter which was dated to the 14-10th centuries cal BC by radiocarbon dates. As a result of this chance discovery, a watching brief was undertaken on the stripping of topsoil during groundworks for a flare stack in an adjacent area, in order to ascertain whether further Bronze Age features survived in the vicinity. An apparently linear feature was identified but on excavation was found to be a natural feature. No other archaeologically significant features were identified during the watching brief.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Cambria Archaeology were commissioned by Posford Haskoning Limited, to undertake an archaeological watching brief in April 2005 in advance of the construction of a flare stack, as part of the Dragon LNG complex at Waterston, Pembrokeshire. The watching brief was the last operation in a programme of archaeological work undertaken following a desk-based archaeological assessment (Crane, 2002) that identified several potential sites requiring further investigation. The watching brief was intended to ascertain the presence of (and to record) any significant archaeological features that might survive in the area of the flare stack, located immediately to the south of the former Gulf oil refinery complex in a pasture field. This area was identified as having some potential to contain Bronze Age features in the light of previous archaeological work undertaken immediately to the west (Crane 2004).

The flare stack site is close to the high part of a ridge (approximately at SM932047). Such a location has potential for the presence of a prehistoric burial mound or a later defensive site. Indeed, PRN45247 at SM930477, is a large (c 50m diameter) circular cropmark in the eastern corner of Mount Field (PRN4507), identified from aerial photographs. It suggests the presence of an archaeological site.

Geophysical survey and subsequent trial trenching in 2003, however, failed to detect any trace of PRN45247 on the ground. During topsoil stripping in this area, however, the chance discovery of a Bronze Age hut circle was made (Crane 2004).

Sherds of prehistoric pottery were also discovered during a watching brief of topsoil stripping on the highest point of the ridge at SM9315504700. Together, these finds suggested the possibility that further prehistoric remains might survive in the area of the flare stack.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

An area measuring 10 x 10 meter area centred on the planned location of the flare stack (at approximately SM932047) was stripped of topsoil down to the top of the natural deposits, under archaeological supervision and using a toothless ditching bucket. Possible features were then cleaned using hand tools and partially excavated in order to ascertain their character.

4.0 RESULTS

A possible linear feature was identified during the soil strip by an apparent change in the subsoil from a coarse marl to a silty deposit. The feature was cleaned and three small sections were excavated across its width in order to

characterise its profile. No finds or inclusions were observed within the excavated deposit to suggest it was not of natural origin. The texture and compaction of the deposit also suggested it was of natural origin. Lastly, the character of the edges of the feature suggested it was not a cut feature, but was instead a variation in the nature of the natural geology.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

Although there were reasonable grounds to suggest that significant prehistoric remains might be expected in the vicinity of the flare stack site, no archaeological features were located during the watching brief on the topsoil strip of the area.

6.0 REFERENCES

- Crane P 2002, Petroplus LNG Development, Archaeological desk-based assessment
Cambria Archaeology report no. 2002/62
- Crane P 2004, Excavations at Newton, Llanstadwell, Pembrokeshire- draft report.
Cambria Archaeology report no. 2004/73

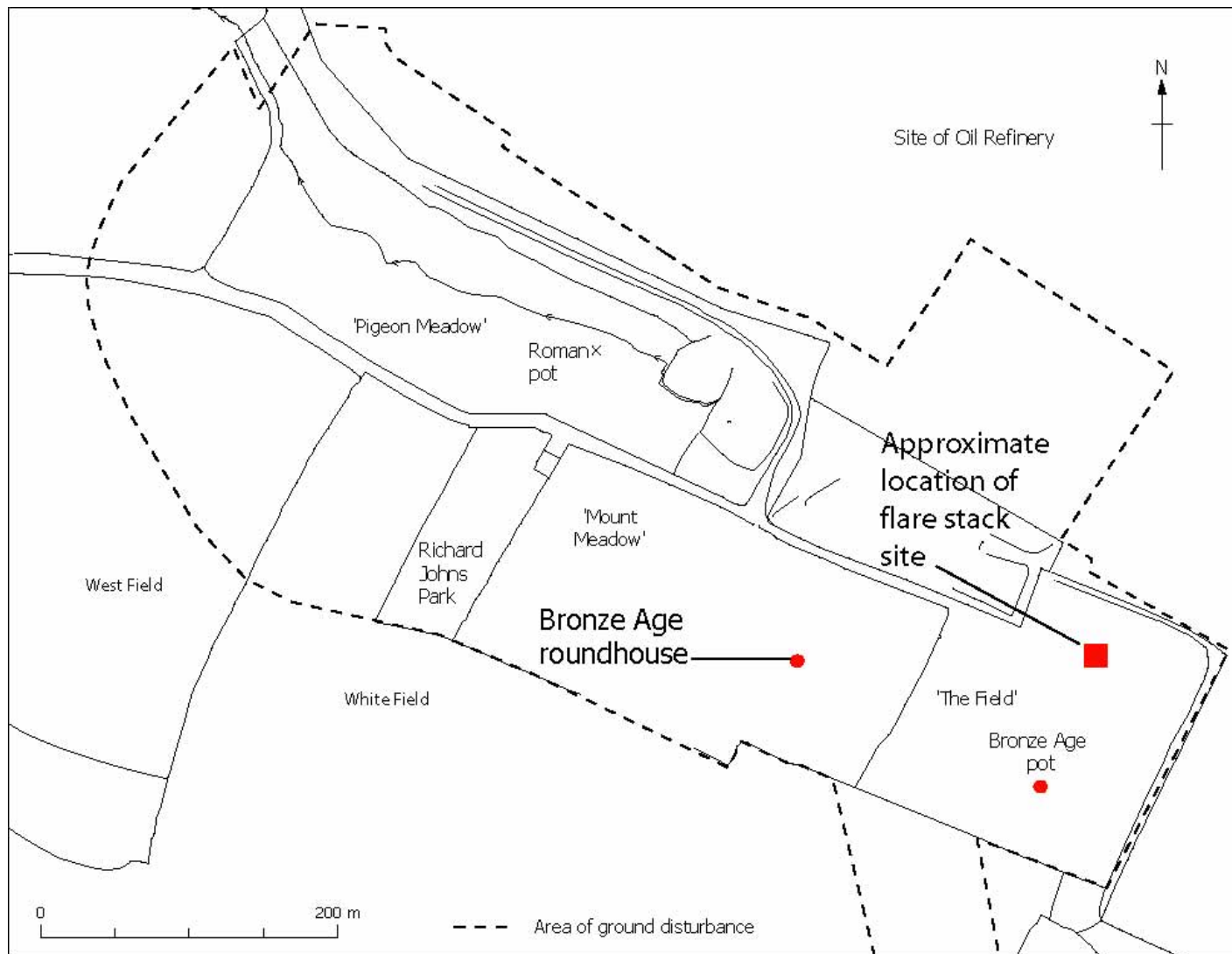


Figure 1: Location of flare stack site to known Bronze Age features



Photo 1: Natural feature before excavation (looking west)



Photo 2: Natural feature after excavation (looking west)



Photo 3: View of excavation (looking east)

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by Duncan Schlee

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 15/04/2005

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

Ken Murphy

ar ran Archaeoleg Cambria, Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Principal Archaeologist (Field Services)

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 15/04/2005

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