

Pengawse, Llanddewi Velfrey, Pembrokeshire.

SN176169 P.R.N. 3060.

The north side of an enigmatic earthwork is to be cut across by the re-routing of the A40 west of Whitland. Ground and air survey of the site produced a comprehensive plan, and in March 1985 a narrow strip of an unscheduled corner was excavated. The results of this investigation were inconclusive, although finds indicated a post-medieval date, and in July 1985 other areas were excavated in an attempt to discover the function of the site.

Excavation demonstrated that the banks visible on the ground surface were made of clay and were not the remains of walls. They could be divided into two categories:

Type 1: These were interpreted as having an enclosing function, and were well-defined on the aerial photographs (see fig.). When excavated they were found to have near vertical sides and to consist of a homogeneous hard brown clay. They were 1.4 - 1.7m. wide and 0.2 - 0.4m. high, although it is possible that they had been eroded by ploughing. In area B they were found to have gullies 0.6m. wide cut down their centres.

Type: 2 These were less well-defined mounds with sloping sides, made up of a series of layers of clay loam. They were only excavated in areas A and B where they were found to be 0.2 - 0.3m. thick. The upper layers contained domestic debris - fragments of pottery, coal, and burnt bone.

Only a patchy buried soil survived below the banks, suggesting that the area had been cleared of topsoil before the banks were constructed.

The enclosing banks were ^u_A bonded on both sides by ditches not less than 1m. in width, which were cut up to 0.4m. into the subsoil. In the southern end of area B, the two mounds were divided by a ditch, 0.5m. wide and running north west to south east which intersected with the larger ditches. Thus the evidence from B suggests that the whole site was criss-crossed by ditches presumably with the intention of draining the central area.

Area C was only partly excavated as it was clearly very similar to B. The eastern end of the trench cut into a large flat-bottomed ^{hollow}_A in the centre of the earthworks, which had been excavated into the subsoil, and had silted up naturally. The bank to the west of this was topped by a line of three large stones, which may have been the remains of a low wall, but no further stones were found when the bank was followed southwards. The west end of C cut across an old field boundary running north west to south east.

A break in the outer banks was investigated in area D, and was found to have been an entrance, consisting of a rough cobbled path, flanked by two shallow gullies. At some stage this entrance had been blocked making the enclosing banks continuous. The gap in the exterior banks west of D, was probably also an entrance.

Trench E was cut across two parallel banks which ran northwards from the main site. These were quite different in character from those previously described, being very loamy, and lying on an in situ buried soil. The western bank was flanked on either side by very shallow ditches, while the eastern bank had a ditch 0.3m. deep on its east side and none on the west. The area between the banks was flat and featureless.

The whole complex of earthworks seems to respect the existing hedgebank and the old north west to south east field boundary. The finds were all post-medieval and the fact that they were most plentiful in the topsoil and upper layers suggests they were a product of manuring, and that the site had an agricultural purpose.

C. Marshall.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust.