

EVALUATION OF A POSSIBLE ROUND BARROW AT TREFIGIN QUARRY, PEMBROKESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION



Prepared by
Cambria Archaeology
For
RPS



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By

Duncan Schlee

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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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This report has been prepared by Duncan Schlee

Position: Project Archaeologist & Archaeologist

Signature Date

This report has been checked and approved by Ken Murphy

Position: Position Principal Archaeological Officer Field Services

Signature Date

on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

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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CONTENTS	PAGE
Introduction	1
Evaluation of the possible round barrow	1
Location	1
Methodology	2
Results	2
Conclusions	2
Recommendations	2
 Figure 1: Location plan	 1
Plate 1: View of possible round barrow prior to evaluation	3
Plate 2: West facing section of evaluation trench	3

EVALUATION OF A POSSIBLE ROUND BARROW AT TREFIGIN QUARRY, PEMBROKESHIRE

INTRODUCTION

Proposals to extend Trefigin Quarry, Pembrokeshire, required an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Cambria Archaeology was commissioned by RPS to carry out a desk-based assessment to fulfil the cultural heritage element of the EIA¹. During a field visit for the assessment, a possible round barrow was identified on a high point on the edge of the existing quarry area.

It was decided by the quarry owners and the consultants that the mound should be investigated and the results included in support of the planning application. Cambria Archaeology was commissioned by RPS to carry out an archaeological evaluation in order to ascertain whether the feature identified was indeed a round barrow. The evaluation took place in September 2005.

EVALUATION OF THE POSSIBLE ROUND BARROW

Location (Fig. 1)

The low circular, nettle-covered mound occupies a prominent high point on the site. The mound is c.18m diameter and stands to c.1m high. The mound has a thick covering of vegetation; nettles, which favour disturbed ground, were dominant towards the centre of the mound whilst the outer edges were grass covered (Plate 1).

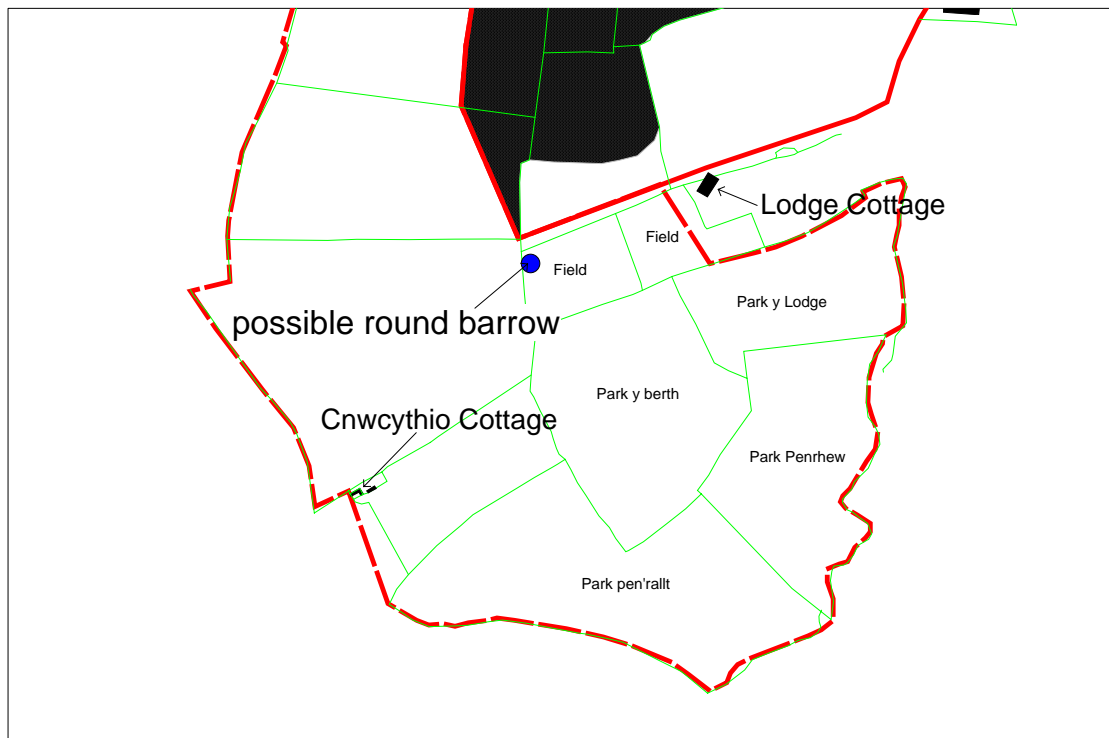


Figure 1: The locations of the two known archaeological sites within the proposed extension area.

¹ Page N 2005, *Proposed extension at Trefigin Quarry, Pembrokeshire: archaeological desk-based assessment*. Cambria Archaeology report number 2005/62.

The form and location of the mound were considered to be typical of Bronze Age round barrows (burial mounds), which tend to be located in prominent positions and are often visible from some distance.

Methodology

A single trench 7.50m long, 2.0m wide and up to 0.80m deep was cut using a machine and toothless bucket supplied by the quarry owners. The trench was positioned on a north-south alignment, parallel to a nearby field boundary. The trench included the apparent northern limit of the feature.

Results

The raised mound was found to consist of soft and loose dark brown-black fine sandy silt with occasional gravel and pebbles, essentially a rich topsoil containing numerous nettle roots and lengths of synthetic baler twine. The deposit was a maximum of 0.40m thick (Plate 2). Below the topsoil was a layer of dark yellow-brown slightly coarser sandy silt with moderate pebble and gravel inclusions. This layer was roughly 0.15m thick and is essentially a sub-soil layer of mixed topsoil and natural gravels. Underlying the subsoil was the top of the natural gravel deposits, a mid grey-yellow mixture of coarse and fine sand with frequent fine sand, gravels and pebbles. The interface between the subsoil and the natural gravels was irregular, caused by a combination of root action and possibly by occasional ploughing.

CONCLUSIONS

The feature did not exhibit any characteristics to suggest that it was a round barrow. The nature of the soil suggests that the raised feature was formed by the remains of a decomposed dump of hay, manure, or was a livestock feeding location.

This evaluation of the possible round barrow site has addressed what was considered in the assessment report to have been the biggest potential archaeological concern. However, other areas still have potential to contain significant archaeological remains and the further archaeological works outlined in the original assessment report may be required.



Plate 1: View of possible round barrow



Plate 2: West facing section of evaluation trench.