

REPAIRS TO BEDD MORRIS STANDING STONE SAM Pe361



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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Repairs to Bedd Morris standing stone

Gan / By

Polly Groom

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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**

CONTENTS

Summary	4
Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Future Management	5
Photographic Record	6
Quality Assurance Report	13

SUMMARY

The standing stone at Bedd Morris is located immediately adjacent to a metalled road, and on open ground grazed by sheep and ponies. The stone was becoming very unstable and a decision was taken to stabilise the base. This was achieved using a concrete 'footing' and restoring the profile of the verge using turf and earth from the local area.

INTRODUCTION

The standing stone at Bedd Morris is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Pe361) and an important landscape feature. It stands on the roadside at an altitude of around 290m, with views over Dinas Head and Newport Bay.

The stone stands at an historic crossroads – running north-south is a road which crosses the Preselis, linking Newport with the Gwaun Valley. Running east-west is the boundary between the parishes of Newport and Llanychlwydog. A number of public rights of way also converge on the site. The stone's landscape positioning is very significant, and this significance has clearly persisted into recent times as it still marks the boundary between different parcels of grazing land. An inscription on one face of the stone records its use as a parish boundary marker, and an Ordnance Survey benchmark has also been added to the site. Finally, local tradition apparently states that the stone was where local boys were beaten during the annual 'beating the bounds' of Newport parish!

The origins of the stone are unclear. Although described as a prehistoric monument, the Scheduling description comments that it is possible the stone has been moved, or maybe laid flat and re-erected when the inscription was added. Combined with the inevitable disturbance caused when the road was metalled right next to the site, it is difficult to evaluate the potential for below-ground remains to survive at the base of this stone.

In 2007 the graziers raised concerns that the stone was de-stabilizing, and that this posed a safety risk to people and livestock, as well as a risk of losing an important local landmark. Cadw's photographic record showed that more of the base of the stone was exposed this year than had been previously, and this was obviously contributing to the lack of stability. Livestock use this as a rubbing stone, and they had caused erosion to the ground at its base, which was exacerbated by a very wet winter followed by an exceptionally hot spring. It is suspected that vibration from the road is also a contributing factor, although it is difficult to prove this.

In consultation with Cadw, it was decided that stabilisation needed to be carried out at the base of the stone. It is a requirement of the Scheduled Monument Consent that the work was recorded, and this report has been produced for Cadw to fulfil that requirement, and for the site owners to confirm that the proposed works have been carried out.

METHODOLOGY

The works were carried out on a dry, clear day in June 2007, by members of PCNPA staff and under archaeological supervision.

The erosion was limited to the eastern side of the stone, closest to the road, where the stone sat in a distinct hollow. The turf was lifted from the hollow and some of the loose topsoil scraped to produce a level, solid surface to build up from. In the course of this clearance, it was noted that the hardcore from the road surface extended almost up to the stone, underneath the topsoil, and that the topsoil contained a large amount of modern debris – mostly glass and plastic. There was no sign of any undisturbed deposits. Hardcore was not removed.

Once the turf was removed, part of the base of the stone was exposed. What could be seen of it appeared to have been deliberately shaped and 'squared off'. What had, initially, been taken to be a packing stone was actually part of the base of the standing stone, but a large crack was running right through it.

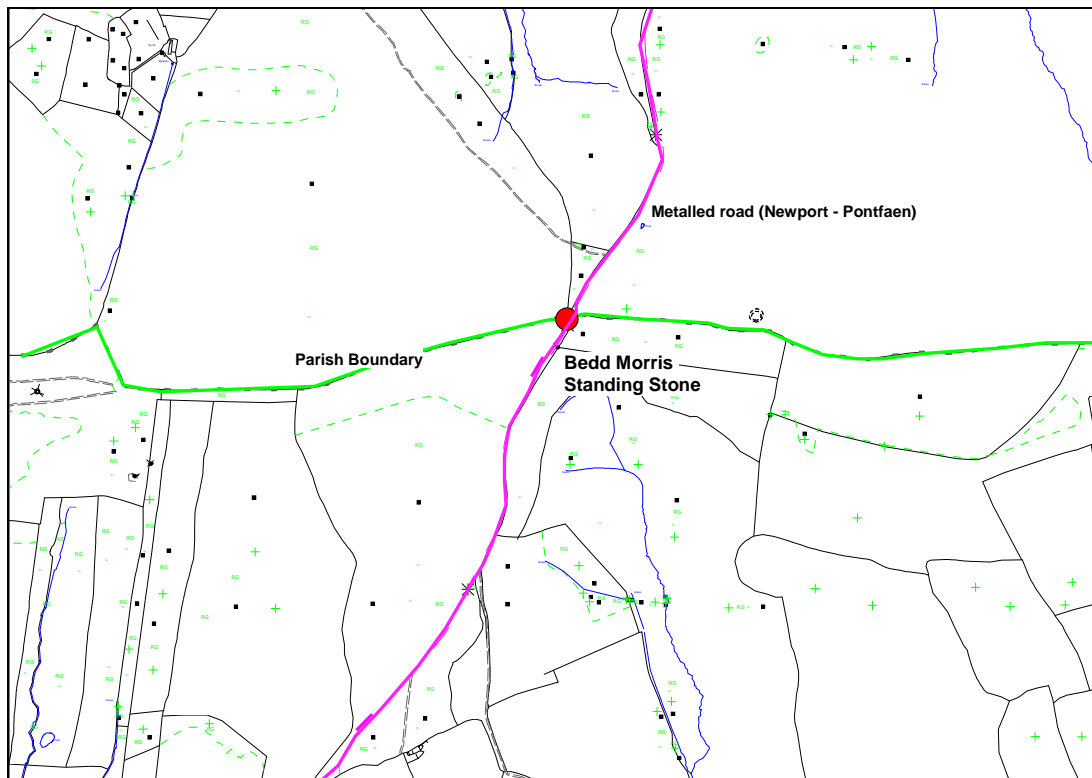
Beams made of recycled plastic were placed adjacent to the square edges of the stone's base, and concrete poured in behind them. This is intended to act as a solid 'buffer' and prevent any movement of the stone. Earth was then mounded up over the concrete, the profile of the verge was restored, and the turf re-instated.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

Temporary fencing has been put up around the stone to keep stock off until the turf has time to recover. The site will be monitored at intervals to ensure that the repair has succeeded.

Stocking levels will continue to be low on this land, and it is hoped that there will be no further need for intervention at this site.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Map showing the location of Bedd Morris standing stone, SN038365



Picture 1: the stone before any works were carried out. The stone tapers to its base, and had become de-stabilised on the roadward side. The face has an inscription relating to its use as a parish boundary marker.



Picture 2: close-up of the base of the stone. The ground drops away from the verge (back of photo) towards the road, leaving a distinct hollow in front of the stone.



Picture 3: showing the stone with an area de-turfed and prepared for in-filling. Some of the topsoil had to be scraped away as it was so loose that it would not provide a solid base for repair work. The soil overlay hardcore from the road, and contained a large amount of glass and modern debris. In total, including turf, a total depth of around 150mm was removed.



Picture 4: a close-up of the base of the stone. Note the large crack which runs through the base of the stone, and the square shape of the base.



Picture 5: the concrete 'buffer' in place at the base of the stone. The square shape of the base meant that it was possible to use rigid beams of recycled plastic rather than plastic sheeting. No voids were left between the plastic and the stone's base.



Pictures 6 and 7: covering the concrete with locally sourced soil.



Picture 8: re-turfing



Picture 9: The restored profile of the roadside verge after re-turfing



Picture 10: Showing the stone after work was completed. The temporary fencing has now been re-instated to give the turf a chance to 'take' before stock are allowed to return.



Pictures 11 and 12: showing the depth of stone which has been 're-buried'. The Ordnance Survey benchmark is a useful reference and monitoring point!

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by Polly Groom

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park)

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

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

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

Swydd / Position: Principal Archaeologist (Heritage Management)

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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