

LLANRHIAN CHURCH, CROES GOCH, PEMBROKESHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Frans Nicholas Architects Ltd



ymddiriedolaeth archaeolegol



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Gan / By

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**LLANRHIAN CHURCH, CROES GOCH, PEMBROKESHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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Summary

As part of an extensive renovation programme for Llanrhian parish church Croes Goch, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM81933144, PRN 2837) an archaeological watching brief be maintained during groundworks in the churchyard.

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned to undertake the watching brief in November 2008 by Frans Nicholas Architects Ltd acting on behalf of Mr Robin Moore, Church Warden.

A probable 19th century grave and building debris from the rebuilding of the church were recorded during the course of the watching brief. No further archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the excavations.

INTRODUCTION

Project Commission

As part of extensive renovation works at Llanrhian Church, Croes Goch, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM81933144. PRN 2837) excavations were required within the graveyard for the construction of a drainage channel, path resurfacing and cable laying. Given the location of the excavations it was recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the course of the groundworks.

To comply with this recommendation Frans Nicholas Architects Ltd acting on behalf of Mr Robin Moore, Church Warden commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to undertake the archaeological watching brief in November 2008.

Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during major episodes of earth moving or ground breaking.

Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER¹) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

Illustrations

Record photographs are included at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

¹ Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

THE SITE

Location

The site is located at NGR SM 81933144 at the centre of the village of Llanrhian, Pembrokeshire. Topographically the site is broadly level and is situated at a height of c. 50m OD.

Archaeological Background

The present cruciform parish church of Llanrhian dates largely from rebuilding in the 19th century with the nave and transepts constructed in 1836, and chancel added sometime prior to 1891 (Ludlow, 2000). However, the west tower dates from the late 14th century that indicates there has been a church at Llanrhian since at least the medieval period.

The form of the pre-rebuild church can be partly reconstructed through documentary sources. A early 19th century reference describes the church as consisting of:

'a sort of stunted tower, and has the nave divided by a row of low pillars, near one of which I formerly recollect to have seen a mutilated effigy of a priest' (Fenton, 1811).

This effigy appears to have been lost. However, the church still contains a late medieval octagonal font bowl decorated with inverted shields, one of which bears the arms of Sir Rhys ap Thomas (Lloyd, *et al*, 2004, 256). There is some tradition that the font originally came from Jerusalem, although it is not possible to substantiate this.

Whilst the church is known to have medieval origins it is likely that there has been a church at Llanrhian prior to the Norman conquest. The dedication of the church to the 'Celtic' saint St Rhian or Rheanus, as opposed to one of the Roman church, may suggest an early foundation. Additionally, the existence of an early Christian monument (PRN 9552) at Llanrhian church may also suggest an early date for a church or other form of ecclesiastical foundation at the site. There is also the suggestion that the rectangular churchyard (PRN 46818) may also have an early medieval origins. The presence of these three forms of evidence has led to the site being assessed as high probability early medieval origin (Ludlow, 2003).

WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

Methodology

The watching brief comprised a site visit to monitor groundworks during the resurfacing of a path within the churchyard, the excavation of a drainage channel and the laying of an electricity cable.

Results

The excavations of the 1.5 x 2.5m soakaway revealed a 1.5m deep layer of friable dark brown clay-silt containing 20% large subangular stone and 10% roofing slate. This layer was probably a dump of material following 19th century rebuilding of the church. In the south section of the soakaway the edge of a grave was recorded which consisted of a slate kerb with visible length of 1.1m and maximum depth of 0.39m and thickness of 0.03m. At the east end of the kerb a 0.5m long x 0.33m wide rectangular slate footstone was present. Stylistically, given the presence of other comparable examples within the churchyard, the grave would appear to date from the mid to latter part of the 19th century.

No other archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief as it was not possible to monitor the path resurfacing or electricity cable laying. However, following consultation with the contractor, photographs of the works were supplied by Rev. Bennett the Vicar, that provide evidence that no significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed.

Conclusions

With the exception of the probable 19th century grave and material from the rebuilding of the church, no significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the groundworks.

Sources

Map

Ordnance Survey 1888 1:10560 Pembrokeshire Sheet XV NW.

Ordnance Survey 1908 1:10560 Pembrokeshire Sheet XV NW.

Ordnance Survey 2002 1:50000 North Pembrokeshire.

Published Sources

Fenton R 1902 *A Historical Tour Through Pembrokeshire*.

Lloyd T, Orbach, J & Scourfield R 2004 *The Buildings of Wales: Pembrokeshire*. New Haven and London. Yale Univeristy Press.

Rodwell W 2005 *The Archaeology of Churches*. Stroud. Tempus.

Unpublished Sources

Ludlow N 2000 *CADW Historic Churches Project :North Pembrokeshire Churches*.

Ludlow N 2003 CADW Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites Project. Cambria Archaeology Report Number 2003/39.



Figure 1: Location map of site based on Ordnance Survey.

Reproduced from the 2002 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

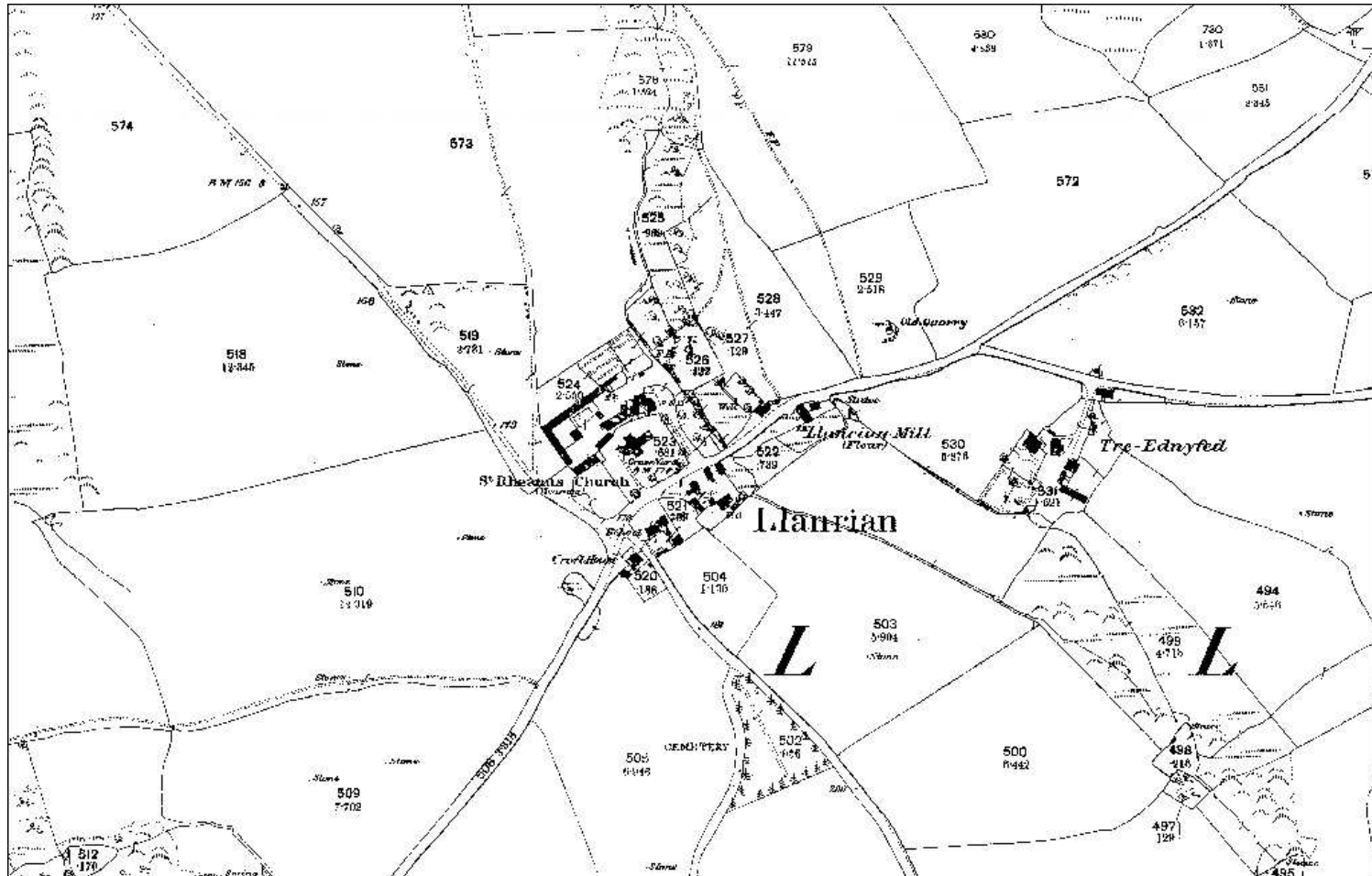


Figure 2: Extract of 1st edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map 1888

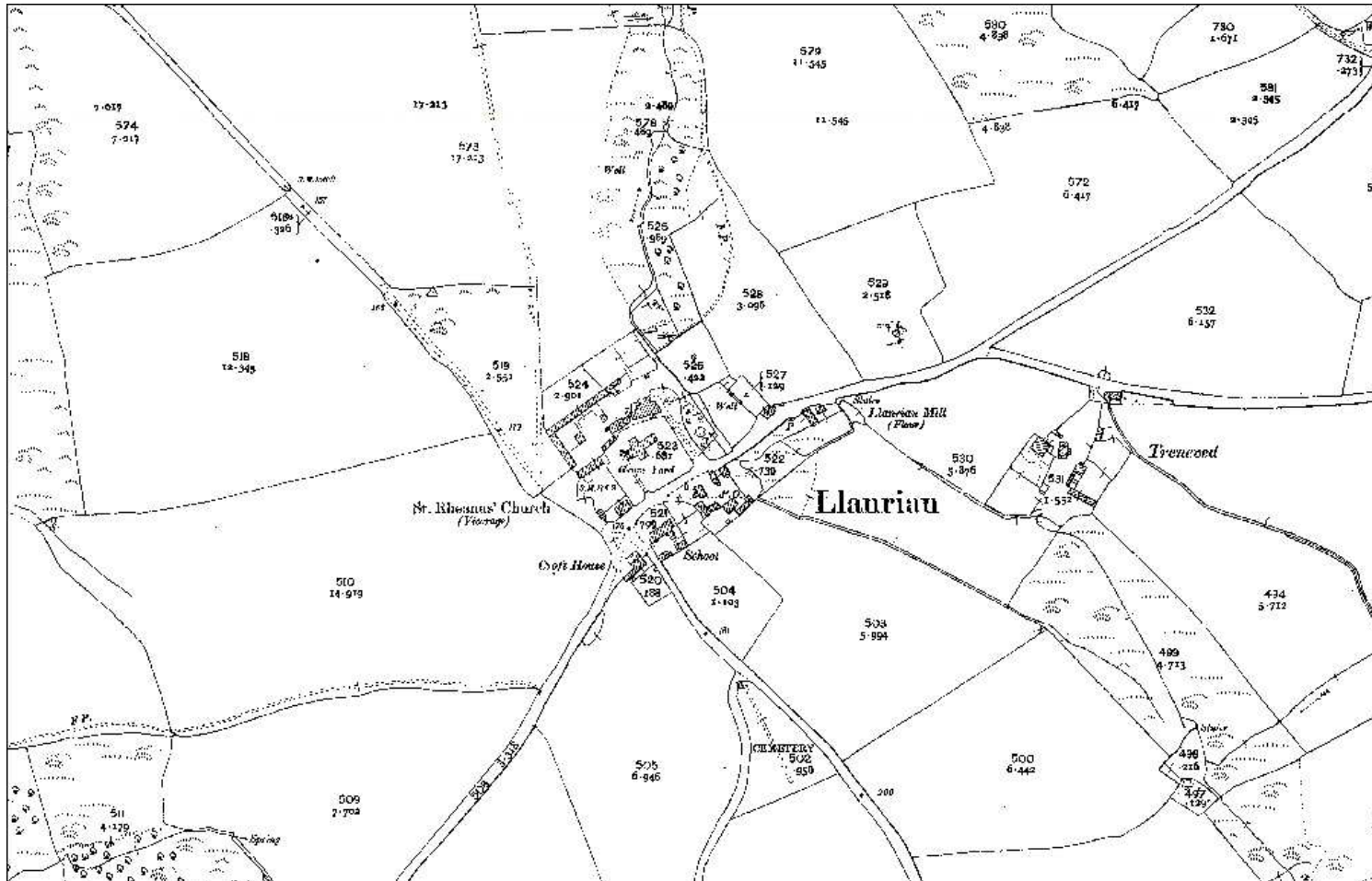


Figure 3: Extract of 2nd edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map 1908.



Figure 4: location plan of groundworks



Photo. 1: West facing section of soakaway.



Photo. 2: Probable 19th century grave revealed in south section of soakaway.



Photo. 3: view of soakaway. Demolition material visible in top right. Grave to right of centre.



Photo. 4: Test pit in footpath



Photo. 5: Test pit in footpath



Photo. 6: East facing view of drainage trench