

**CRUGMORE FARM, PENPARC,
CEREDIGION
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

SEPTEMBER 2009



Prepared by:
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For:
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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2009/57
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 96705

Medi 2009
September 2009

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Gan / By

Philip Poucher

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CRUGMORE FARM, PENPARC, CEREDIGION ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

The construction of a fishing pond and boating lake at Crugmore Farm, Penparc, (Planning application No A050099, NGR SN 2075 4696) required an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks as a condition of planning permission for the development. The site is believed to lie in the vicinity of an important 12th century battlefield fought between Welsh and Anglo-Norman forces and it was considered evidence of this battle may be present within the area of development.

The developer, Mr Mark Davies of Crugmore Farm, through his agent, Asbri Planning, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to undertake the archaeological watching brief in May 2009. The groundworks were undertaken in June and August 2009.

A former field boundary was recorded located at the southern end of the development area, otherwise no archaeologically significant finds or features were recorded within the development area. The natural topography and ground conditions within this field would indicate it is an unlikely site for part of the 12th century battlefield.

INTRODUCTION

Project Commission

The construction of a fishing pond and boating lake at Crugmore Farm, Penparc, (Planning application No A050099, NGR SN 2075 4696) required an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks as a condition of planning permission for the development. The site is believed to lie in the vicinity of an important 12th century battlefield fought between Welsh and Anglo-Norman forces. Given the site's location it was considered that *'whilst the precise site of this battle cannot be determined it is possible that archaeological material associated with this battlefield may exist in the development area and may be adversely affected by the proposed development'*¹. Therefore, it was recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out on any ground disturbance during the proposed development that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy any underlying archaeological remains that may have been present. Mr Mark Davies of Crugmore Farm commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the archaeological watching brief in May 2009.

Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during episodes of topsoil clearance and ground breaking activity associated with the construction of the fishing pond and boating lake.

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

HER - Regional Historic Environment Record²

NGR - National Grid Reference

SAM - Scheduled Ancient Monuments

¹ Information contained in the letter sent to the Ceredigion County Council Planning Department by their archaeological advisors, Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Heritage Management, dated 23rd February 2005.

² Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

THE SITE

Location

Crugmore Farm lies on the southern edge of Penparc, on the upper slopes of Banc y Warren overlooking Cardigan town to the west. The site itself is located in a field to the south of Crugmore Farm, adjacent to Cwrt Farm (NGR SN 2075 4696). The field slopes gradually down the hill to the west, consisting in the main of quite wet ground, crossed by numerous small former water courses. The ground begins to rise sharply to a ridge at the eastern end of the field, which is bounded to the south by a hedgeline and stream, by further hedges to the east and north, and a fenceline to the west.

Due to its wet nature the field has been used mainly as pasture and rough ground prior to development.

The underlying solid geology of the area consists of Ashgill Ordovician Shales.

Archaeological Background

The name 'Crugmore' is suggestive of a possible round barrow site in the area, as Crug is often used to refer to the stone mound covering of these Bronze Age burial sites. Gerald of Wales, writing in 1188, also refers to such a mound, or tumulus, on top of Crug Mawr. This is likely to be the summit of the hill, now known as Banc y Warren that stands some 600m northwest of this site. There is also a reference to the site of an even older Neolithic burial chamber located close to the road in Penparc (Babington 1859) and both Neolithic and Mesolithic flints have been discovered around Penparc. Although none of these sites and finds have been recorded within the development area they demonstrate an active use of this landscape throughout the prehistoric period. Similarly an Iron Age defended enclosure can be seen on aerial photographs on the northern edge of Penparc.

Although it is likely this area was being farmed and settled throughout the Roman period evidence from this period and the subsequent early medieval period is scarce in the immediate vicinity, although Roman camps are suspected in Cardigan or the hills to the north, and a monastic settlement was established at nearby St Dogmaels in the 6th century.

By the late 11th/early 12th century the first wave of Anglo-Norman invasions had swept through this area, establishing a castle and small town at Cardigan and taking control of large areas of west Wales. However, in 1136, encouraged by the death of Richard FitzGilbert, the Anglo-Norman lord of Cardigan, Welsh forces from Gwynedd and Deheubarth rose in revolt. These Welsh forces marched on Cardigan and were met by a hastily assembled Anglo-Norman force on the slopes of Crug Mawr (Banc y Warren). In the ensuing battle the Welsh won a significant victory and regained control of Ceredigion. Cardigan was to remain a focus of conflict between Welsh and Anglo-Norman forces throughout large parts of the medieval period.

The establishment of a dwelling at Crugmore Farm may also have its origins in the medieval period. Francis Jones (Charles Jones 2000) records references to a mansion house here as far back as 1535, being used as a gentry dwelling throughout much of the post medieval period. It is unclear if this mansion was sited away from the current farmstead or if it now lies underneath the farmstead, or indeed if remains of it are incorporated into some of the current buildings as these early documentary references do not describe its precise location.

Certainly by the time of mid 19th century maps the current farmstead was well established, as were the field systems that surrounded it. The 1st edition

Ordnance Survey map of 1889 shows the current development site as a field of wet marshy ground which it appears to have remained until the current developments.

Previous Archaeological Studies

There have been three pieces of previous archaeological work in the vicinity.

In 2003 a Desk-Based Assessment and subsequent Watching Brief and metal detector survey was undertaken prior to and during the excavation of a small pipe trench between Crugmore Farm and Cardigan (Page 2003a & Page 2003b). Although ostensibly this work was looking for evidence of the 12th century battle the only artefacts recovered were of 19th/20th century date.

In 2004, as part of the Tir Gofal agri-environmental scheme, an archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken on lands held by Crugmore Farm (Milne 2004). This study further highlighted the medieval battle site, as well as recording the early origins to a mansion at Crugmore Farm, but no specific archaeological features were identified within the area of the proposed fishing and boating lakes.

WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Methodology

The watching brief methodology consisted of two site visits being made to monitor the removal of large areas of topsoil and the excavation of the lake site. The removal of the topsoil was undertaken by bulldozer, clearing an area measuring roughly 130m by 100m, down to the appearance of natural subsoils. The excavation of the lake was undertaken by mechanical excavator, with the material being removed from site by truck. Imported clay was to used line the lake and act as a bund for the eastern edge. The topsoil strip was undertaken first on the 24th June, the weather was warm with clear skies. The excavation was undertaken over several days in early August when the weather was fine but cloudy.

Prior to and during the stripping of topsoil large areas of the site and piled up topsoil were also examined with the use of a metal detector.

Results

The topsoil consisted of a regular deposit c.0.2m thick of mid orange-brown, friable, clayey-loam with occasional small-medium sub-rounded stone inclusions. The finds recovered from this deposit consisted of a small scattering of broken 19th/20th century porcelain and ceramic pipes, with a small range of broken iron agricultural objects of the same period. No medieval (or earlier) finds or features were revealed within this deposit, which overlay a series of natural subsoils.

The subsoils consisted mainly of three visible layers. The uppermost being a dark-grey, firm, fine silty-clay ranging from 0.1m to 0.3m thick, with rare sub-rounded stone inclusions. This overlay a deposit of mottled light yellow-brown gritty-clay, which in turn overlay a light grey sandy-clay. All these deposits appeared to be naturally occurring layers, mostly laid down through glacio-fluvial action. No archaeological features or finds were revealed in these deposits although areas of peat, organic deposits and former watercourses were revealed.

A low bank was recorded at the western end of the development area. The bank was c.0.2m high, c.5m wide and ran from the current northern hedgeline in a south-easterly direction for c.80m as far as a former watercourse that ran east-west down the length of the field. A shallow ditch c.2.5m wide ran along the eastern side of the bank. Both bank and ditch lay c.10m east of the current fenceline denoting the western end of the field, and would appear to represent the former field boundary, as depicted on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map.

CONCLUSIONS

A former field boundary was recorded at the western end of the development area and a scattering of 19th/20th century finds were recovered from the general area of the proposed fishing and boating lakes.

The natural subsoils indicate that the ground in this field has been wet marshy ground for long periods of time. The area is also closely overlooked by a ridge to the east, both factors would suggest this particular field is unlikely to have been the site of the medieval battle of Crug Mawr. Archaeological evidence or the battle may still lie in the vicinity of the site area.

The scattering of 19th and 20th century finds across the development area indicates agricultural activity during these periods, and are of low archaeological importance. The broken pipes suggest drainage schemes across the fields, again highlighting the marshy nature of the ground.

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Maps

Ordnance Survey, 1889, 1st Ed. Cardiganshire (25" to 1 mile) Sheet XXXVIII.2

Ordnance Survey, 1905, 2nd Ed. Cardiganshire (25" to 1 mile) Sheet XXXVIII.2



Figure 1: Location map showing the watching brief area (red circle).

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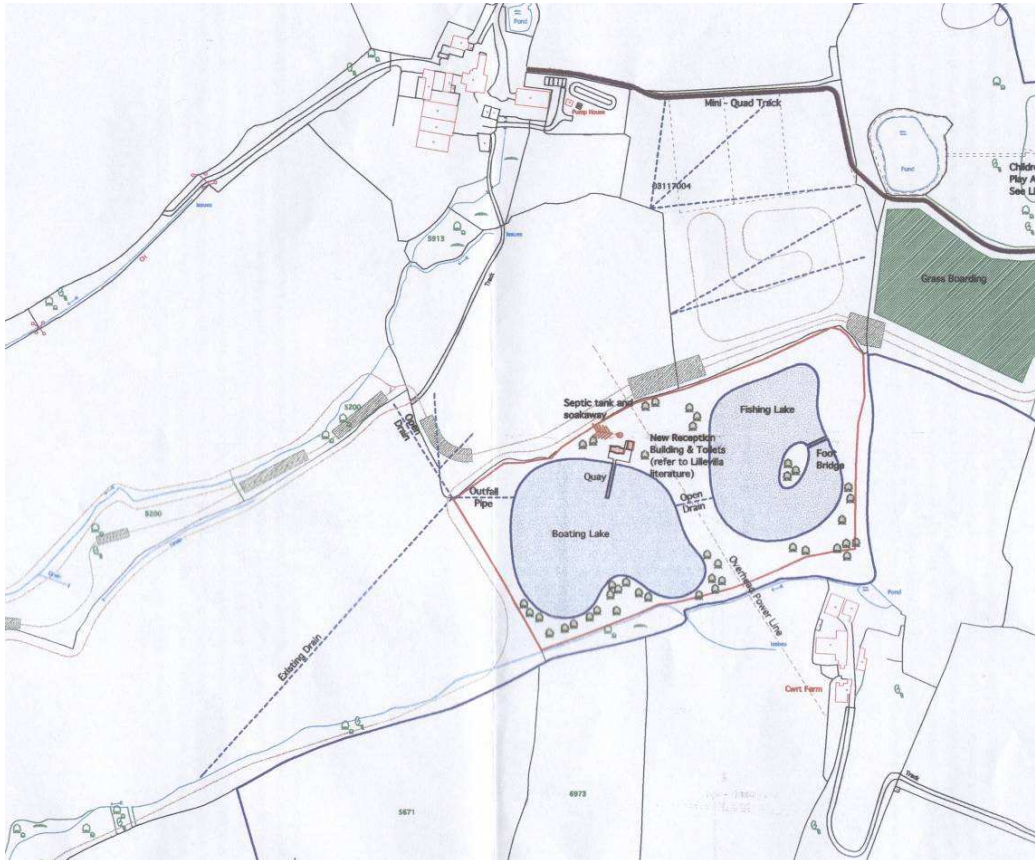


Figure 2: Plan of the proposed boating and fishing lakes at Crugmore Farm, copyright Trevor Hopkins Associates. Plan provided by Asbri Planning.



Photo 1: Looking west across the site in the initial stages of clearance.



Photo 2: Looking north at an area of natural subsoils being revealed below the topsoil.



Photo 3. Looking east across the development during the excavation of the lake site.



Photo 4. Looking south at the excavated area showing the depth of excavation and the natural clays revealed.

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan /
This report has been prepared by : **Phil Poucher**

Swydd / Position: **Archaeologist**

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: **James Meek**

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf. /
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: **Head of Field Services**

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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