

**GELLI AUR, GLANRHYD,  
PEMBROKESHIRE  
(SN 1496 4248)  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**June 2010**



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
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## GELLI AUR, GLANRHYD, PEMBROKESHIRE, ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

Andrew Shobbrook

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## **GELLI AUR, GLANRHYD, PEMBROKESHIRE, ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### **SUMMARY**

*Planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension to an existing distribution yard at Gelli Aur, Glanrhyd, Cardigan, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 1496 4248; Planning Application No.08/0305/PA). A condition was placed on planning permission which required that an archaeological watching brief was to be undertaken during groundworks at the site following advice from the archaeological advisors to the planning authority. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned to undertake the watching brief by ATSS Ltd.*

*The planning condition was placed on the development due to the yard extension area lying in close proximity to the site of a cropmark ring ditch which is thought to be either a Bronze Age round barrow or a small defended enclosure. It was considered that the proposed groundworks associated with the extension could expose, damage or destroy any archaeological remains that may lie within its footprint.*

*The footprint of the yard extension was machine excavated down to the natural subsoil with a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. The machined area measured a total of 100m x 25m. A single pit was discovered at the southwestern end of the development. Four postholes set in a square arrangement were also observed and recorded in the middle of the development area. To the east of these four postholes another two possible postholes were recorded. No other archaeological features were revealed during the watching brief.*

*Although no dating evidence was found associated with the postholes, there is a possibility that they may be of prehistoric date. The square four-post arrangement is very similar to the remains of Iron Age granary structures usually found in association with settlement. The other pit and pair of postholes may relate to other associated structures. The possibility that the features are of post-medieval or modern date, associated with former structures on the site of the farmstead, cannot be discounted.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Commission**

1.1.1 Planning permission was granted by Pembrokeshire County Council for the construction of a new yard extension at Gelli Aur, Glanrhyd, Cardigan, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 1496 4248; Planning Application No.08/0305/PA). The planning condition required that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during groundworks at the site, following advice from Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management (DAT-HM), the archaeological advisors to the planning authority. ATSS Ltd, the applicant, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the watching brief.

There are no known archaeological interests within the proposed development site boundary, but it lies in close proximity to the site of a cropmark ring ditch (visible as differential growth in vegetation indicating archaeological remains such as ditches beneath). The ring ditch has not been further investigated, but may represent either a possible Bronze Age round barrow (a burial mound) or small defended enclosure<sup>1</sup>.

### **1.2 Scope of the Project**

1.2.1 The aim of the watching brief was to record any features or deposits of archaeological significance that might be exposed, damaged or destroyed by the ground works within the footprint of the proposed yard extension.

### **1.3 Report Outline**

1.3.1 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.

### **1.4 Abbreviations**

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER<sup>2</sup>) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

### **1.5 Illustrations**

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

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<sup>1</sup> Information contained in a letter sent to the Pembrokeshire County Council Planning Department by their archaeological advisors dated 2 July 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

## **2 THE SITE**

### **2.1 Location**

2.1.1 The proposed yard extension at Gelli Aur (NGR SN 1496 4248), is located 4.7km to the south-west of Cardigan. The yard extension is located on the crest of a hill situated c.150m above sea level.

### **2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

2.2.1 The area surrounding the yard extension contains a number of sites of archaeological and historical interest. The presence of the cropmark situated about 125m to the east of the edge of the development (NPRN 405,383, NGR 1511 4250) could either be the remains of a Bronze Age round barrow or a small Iron Age defended settlement. The proximity of this site is such that there is considered a potential for further remains of possible prehistoric activity to be present within and in the vicinity of the proposed development site. The Church at the village of Llantood, located 0.9km to the northwest of the site area, is recorded as having indirect evidence for an early medieval foundation (Ludlow 2003), which may also indicate the possibility of early medieval and later medieval activity taking place within the Llantood Parish area. Listed below is a summary of each of the nearby sites with PRN and NGR numbers included for reference.

2.2.2 Iron Age hillfort Castell Pen-yr-allt (PRN 1170, NGR SN 1578 4203) is situated c.0.9km to the southeast of the yard extension and is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (PE 169).

2.2.3 Iron Age hillfort Castell Felinganol (PRN 1169, NGR SN 1641 4226) is situated c.1.4km to the southeast of the development site, and is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (PE 170).

2.2.4 The site of a Bronze Age standing stone Rhyd Garwen (PRN 13030, NGR SN 1580 4290) is located c.0.9km to the northeast of Gelli Aur and is described as being nearly destroyed.

2.2.5 The site of a Bronze Age standing stone, also called Rhyd Garwen (PRN 46822, NGR SN 1554 4193), is located c.0.7km to the east of the proposed development site and is recorded as being destroyed.

2.2.6 The Early Medieval\Medieval churchyard of Llantwyd Parish Church (PRN 46822, NGR SN 1554 4193), is located c.0.8km to the southeast of the development area. The Medieval church (PRN 5317, SN 1554 4193) is located within the churchyard.

2.2.7 The Medieval Motte, Castell-yr-Allt (PRN 1171, SN 1578 4203), is situated c.0.9km to the south east of the development and is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

2.2.8 The tithe map of 1838 depicts the field boundary in which the proposed yard extension is situated. The field is numbered as 201 and was owned at the time by Captain Thomas Tucker Edwards and occupied by Mr David Griffiths. The first edition (1891) and second edition (1907) Ordnance Survey maps both indicate the development area as being located within fields. The 1891 and 1907 maps both depict a trackway or footpath running from the north-western corner of the field to the south-eastern corner. No other structures, archaeological or historical features are depicted within the field's boundaries.

### **3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY**

3.1 The watching brief comprised two site visits to monitor the removal of the topsoil and subsoil from the footprint of the yard extension.

3.2 The visits were undertaken on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2010.

3.3 Topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. This resulted in the exposed ground surface being fairly clean after machining, and therefore it was possible to recognise the presence or absence of archaeological features with confidence.



## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Overview (Figure 5)**

4.1.1 The building plot was located on the crest of a hill with good views of the surrounding areas.

4.1.1 The topsoil [100] was a dark brown silty clay, which contained small sub-angular stones and measured an average of 0.25m in depth.

4.1.2 The underlying natural subsoil (101) comprised a light-yellowish brown silty clay, and was observed at an average depth of 0.25m below ground level. Discrete patches of degrading shale bedrock were exposed below 101.

### **4.2 Pit [112] (113) (Figure 5)**

4.2.1 A sub-rectangular pit [112] was revealed at the southern end of the yard extension (see figure 4); this feature measured 0.77m wide by 0.89m in length and was a maximum depth of 0.25m (photos 2 and 3).

4.2.2 The fill (113) of pit 112 was a light orange brown silty clay with inclusions of small sub-angular stones. No finds or dating evidence was recovered from the fill.

### **4.3 Four Posthole Setting [102]+(106), [103]+(116), [105]+(107), [114]+(115) (Figure 5 and 6)**

4.3.1 In the mid-western part of the development area a group of four postholes set in a square arrangement were revealed. The distance between the postholes on the east and west sides measured 1.60m in length, with the southern and northern sides measuring 1.20m in width between postholes. The southeastern posthole appeared to be the best preserved, whereas the other three appeared to have suffered truncation from previous ploughing activity within the field. The postholes all contained slate fragments within their fills. In two postholes slate was also placed in their base, perhaps forming a pad upon which the previously present wooden posts would have been placed.

#### ***Northeast posthole [114]+(115)***

4.3.2 Posthole [114] measured 0.38m in diameter. The fill (115) consisted of light reddish brown silty clay and contained occasional small flecks of charcoal. The posthole was not excavated during the watching brief; it appeared to have suffered greatly from plough erosion (photo 9).

#### ***Southeast posthole [102]+(106)***

4.3.3 The south-eastern posthole [102] measured 0.32m in diameter and was 0.07m deep. The bottom of the posthole was lined with slates suggesting the possible presence of a post pad. The fill (106) was a light reddish brown silty clay soil containing occasional small pieces of burnt daub, small sub-angular stones and frequent flecks of charcoal (photos 4,5 and 6).

#### ***Southwest posthole [103]+(116)***

4.3.4 This posthole [103] was 0.64m in diameter. Two large slates appeared to have been placed in the bottom of the cut, which may have formed a post pad. Very little of the fill (116) remained as the posthole had suffered greatly from plough erosion which had probably truncated the majority of the feature. The slight remains of 116 was a light reddish brown silty clay similar to the fills of the other features in this group (photo 7).

***North west posthole [105]+(107)***

4.3.5 The north western posthole [105] measured 0.38m in diameter. The fill (107) was a light reddish brown silty clay soil and was very similar to (106) (see photo 8). Slate fragments were noted within the fill, although the feature was left unexcavated.

**4.4 Postholes [108]+(109), [110]+(111) (Figure 5)**

***Posthole [108]+(109)***

4.4.1 Posthole [108] measured 0.52m in diameter and had a maximum depth of 0.28m. The fill (109) contained a mid brown silty clay soil containing rare flecks of charcoal. Several small to medium sized stones were present in the fill which may have been representative of post packing material.

***Posthole [110]+(111)***

4.4.2 Situated 0.82m to the east of posthole [108] a smaller posthole [110] was recorded. This feature measured 0.28m in diameter and had a maximum depth of 0.14m. The fill (111) comprised a mid brown silty clay soil containing rare flecks of charcoal.

**4.5 Hedge bank on Western Boundary (Figure 5)**

4.5.1 An entrance for access to the development area was constructed through the western field boundary beyond which the yard extension was situated. The field boundary appeared to be constructed of an earth internal core and faced, externally, with slates in a herring bone pattern. The hedge bank measured 2.80m in width along its base and tapered up to a maximum of 1m in height.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief undertaken during the groundworks for the extension of the existing yard at Gelli Aur, Glanrhyd revealed a number of archaeological features of uncertain date. These included a single undated pit, a pair of postholes and a square arrangement of four postholes.

5.1.2 The pit found to the south of the yard extension produced no datable material. No further conclusions can be made regarding this feature.

5.1.3 The pair of postholes discovered in the middle of the eastern end of the site area also produced no datable material. No other features were found in the vicinity to indicate that they formed part of a larger structure; although it was noted that the site area had been badly truncated by previous episodes of ploughing which may have removed any shallow archaeological features. The function of the postholes is thus uncertain.

5.1.4 The group of four postholes also produced no datable material. The layout could be evidence for a four poster 'granary' structure, examples of which are quite commonly found within Iron Age settlements. Such structures comprised four posts at the corners of the building, between which a suspended structure was constructed, keeping the floor off the ground and therefore keeping grain safe from rodents and damp. An example of this type of structure was excavated and recorded within the hillfort at Castell Henllys, near Nevern in north Pembrokeshire, where a total of five of these four post structures were excavated (Rees, 1992, 61). Although these raised buildings are usually found within defended enclosures it is possible that they may also have been constructed within undefended settlements or within open agricultural land. However, the possibility that these features are of more recent date, post-medieval or modern, cannot be discounted.

5.1.5 The site raises the potential for prehistoric activity of possible Iron Age date to be present within and in the vicinity of the site area. It is probable that dating evidence is present in the vicinity which could provide better information on the origin of these features.

5.1.6 No other archaeological features were revealed during the watching brief.

## **6 SOURCES**

### **Map**

Llantood Tithe map December 6<sup>th</sup> 1838

Ordnance Survey, 1891, Pembrokeshire Sheet VI NE 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:10,560

Ordnance Survey, 1907, Pembrokeshire Sheet VI NE 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10,560

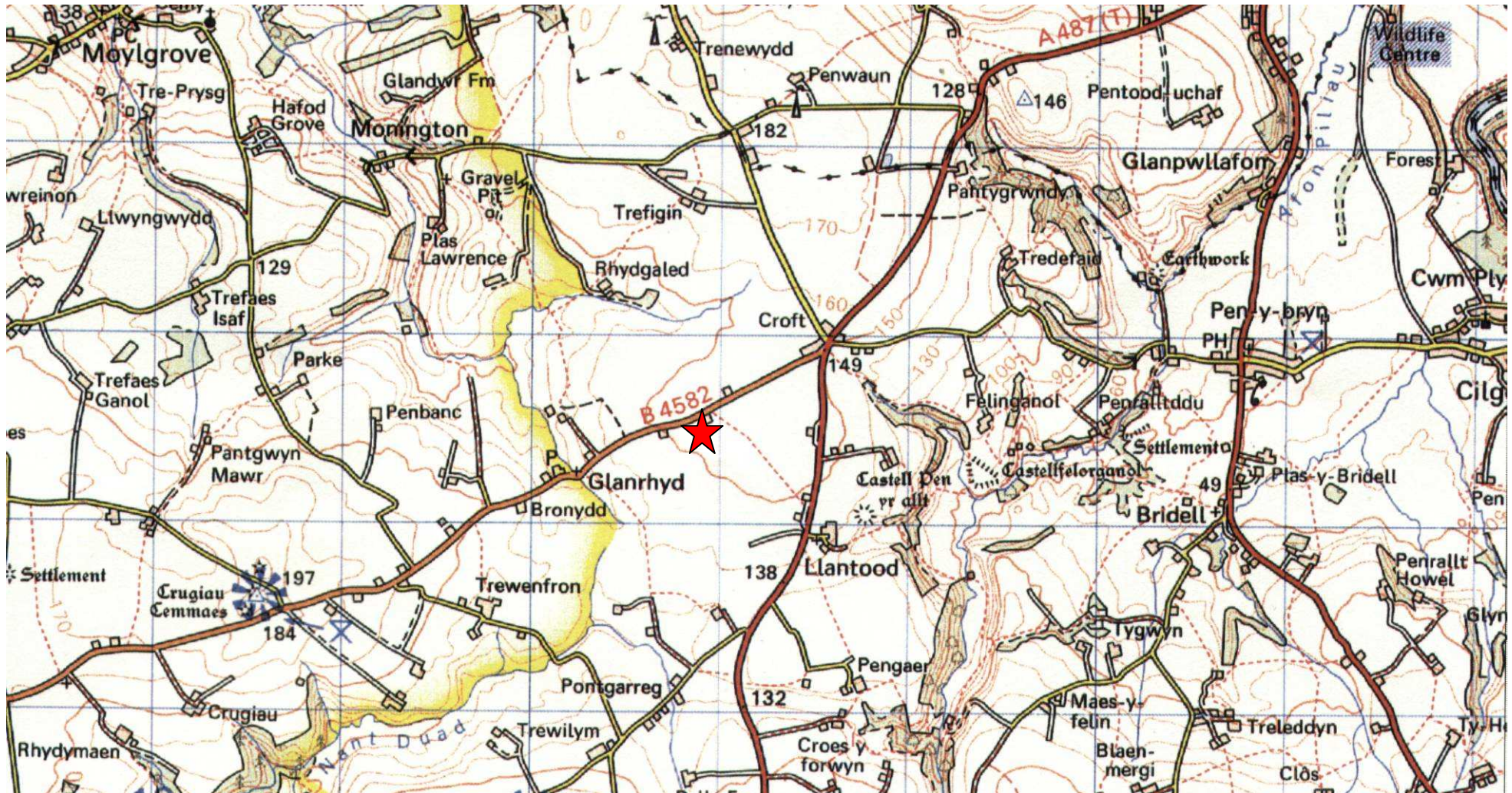
Ordnance Survey, 1996, Cardigan and Mynydd Preseli. 1:50 000

### **Unpublished Sources**

Ludlow, 2003. Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites project Stage Two Pembrokeshire. Cambria Archaeology.

Rees, 1992. A guide to ancient and historic Wales, Dyfed. London: HMSO

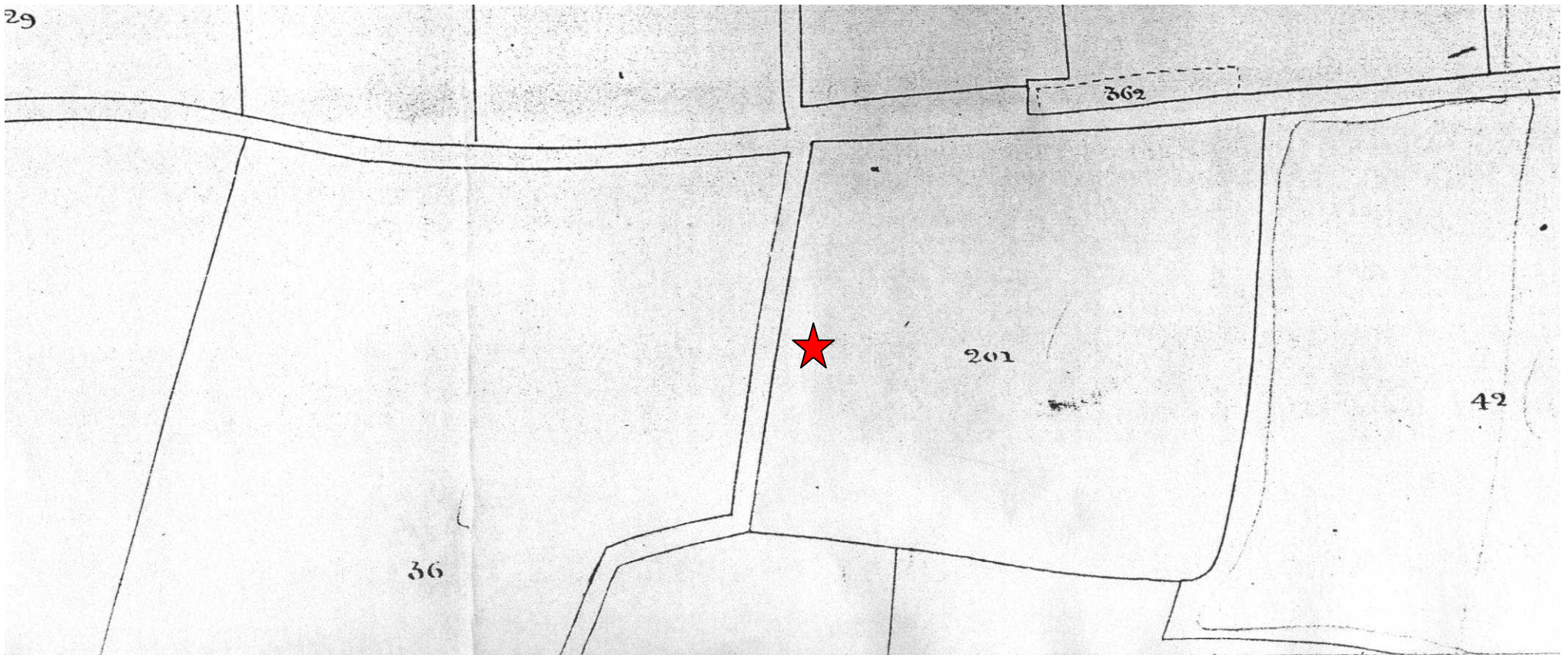




**Figure 1:** Location map, based on the Ordnance Survey. Red star shows location of the site.

Reproduced from the 1995 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office,  
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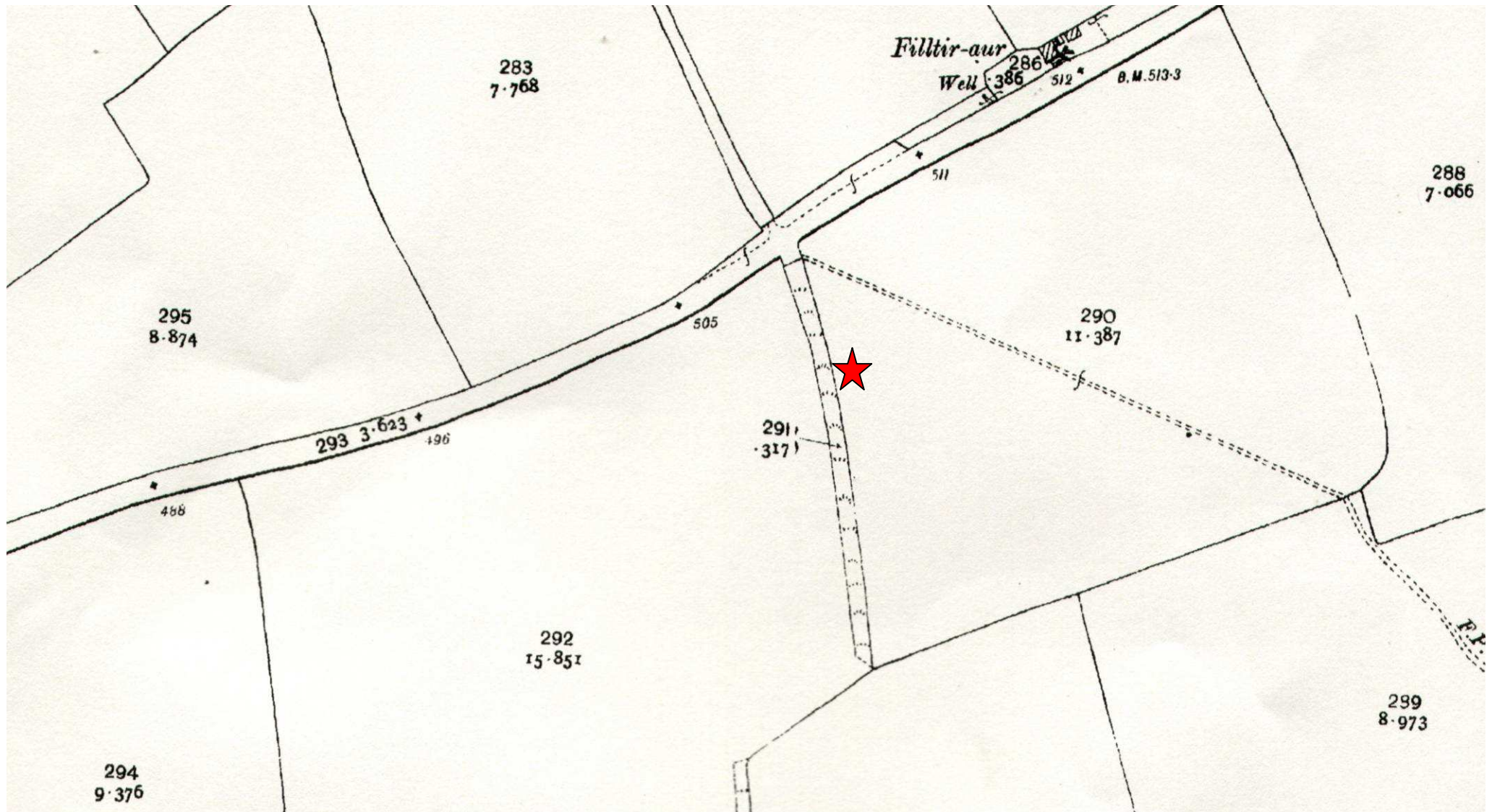


**Figure 2:** Tithe map of 1838. Red star shows location of centre of the development area.



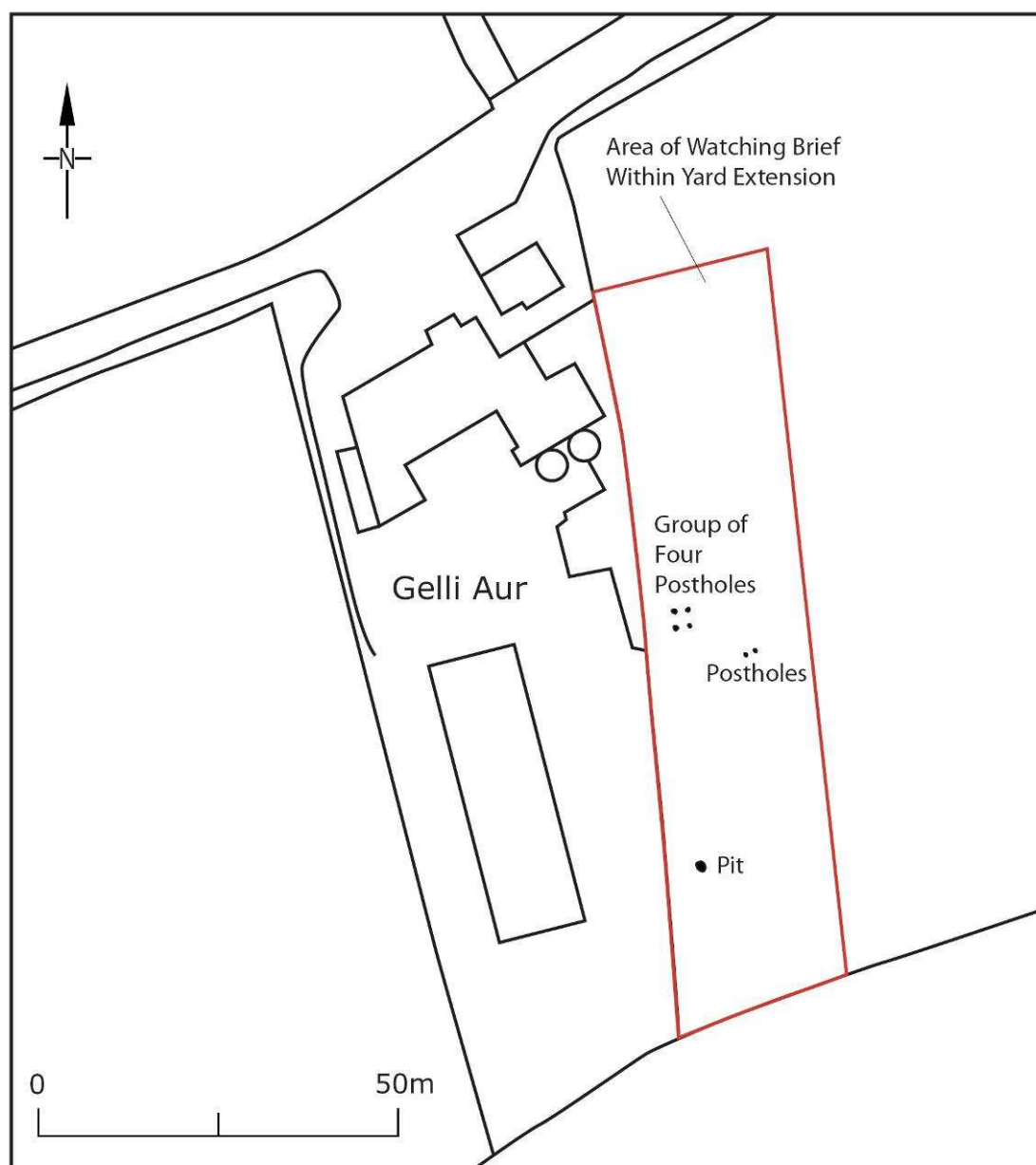
**Figure 3:** Extract of 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1891 showing centre of development site.



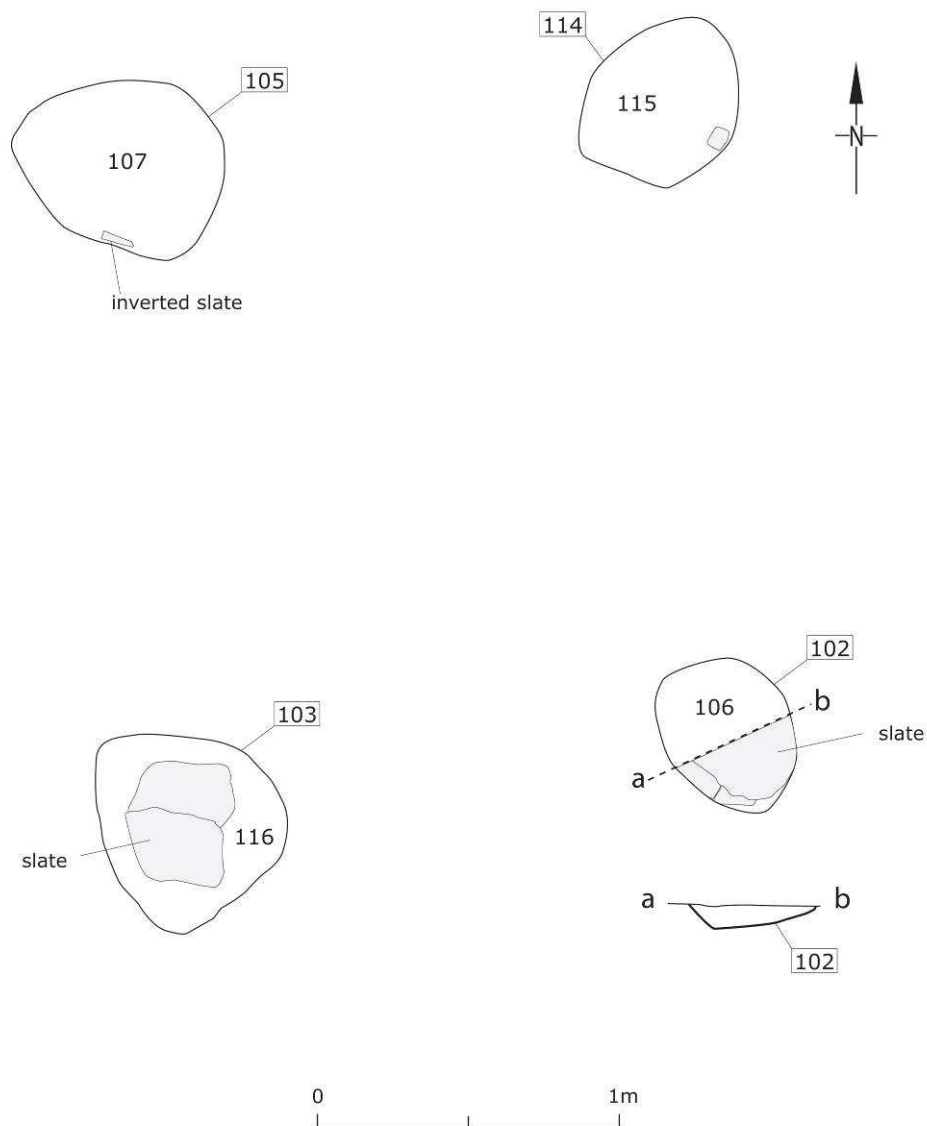


**Figure 4:** Extract of Ordnance Survey map of 1907 showing centre of the development site.





**Figure 5:** Plan of site showing locations of archaeological features.



**Figure 6:** Plan of four postholes setting with half section of posthole [102].

<i>Period</i>	<i>Approximate Date</i>
Palaeolithic	c.225,000 BC – 10,000 BC
Mesolithic	c.10,000 BC – c.3500 BC
Neolithic	c.3500 BC – c.2000 BC
Bronze Age	c.2000 BC – c.600 BC
Iron Age	c.600 BC – 43 AD
Roman	43 AD – 410 AD
Early Medieval	410 AD - 1066
Medieval	1066 - 1485
Post Medieval	1485 – c.1900
Modern	c.1900 onwards

**Table 1:** Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.



**Photo 1:** Pre-excavation view showing the development site during initial topsoil removal.



**Photo 2:** View of pit [112] after half-sectioning. 1m scale.





**Photo 3:** View south of half-sectioned pit [112].1m scale.

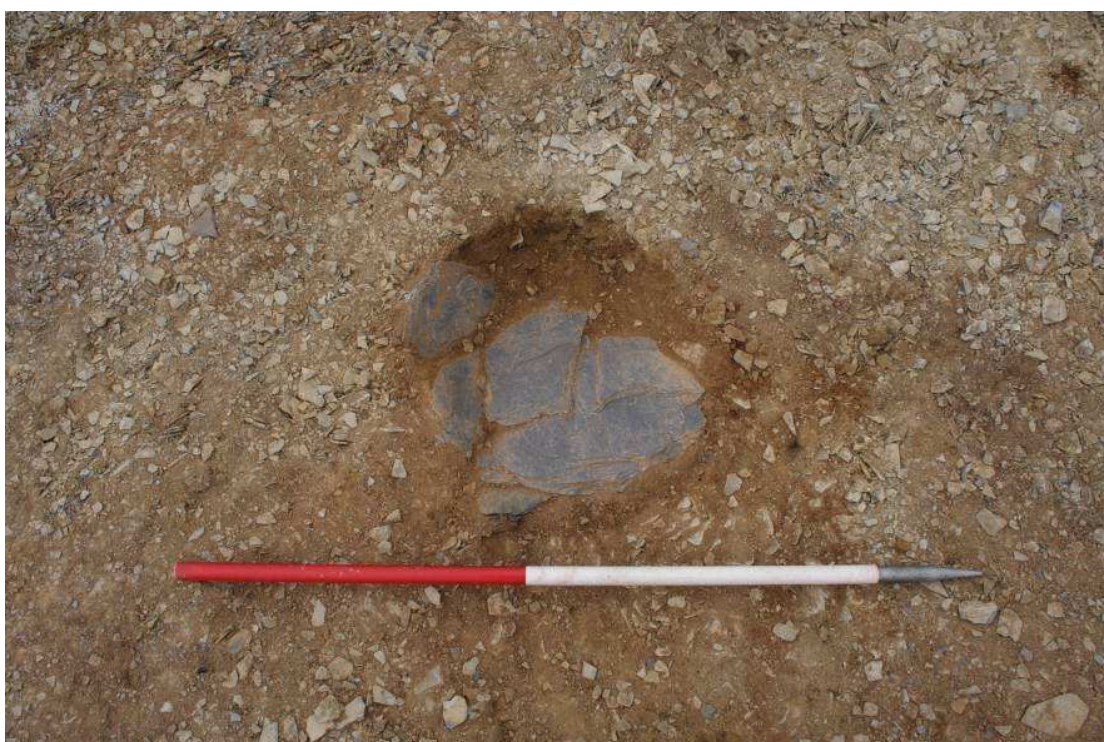


**Photo 4:** View of unexcavated posthole [102]. 1m scale.





**Photo.5:** View north of half-sectioned posthole [102].



**Photo.6:** Photo showing excavated posthole [102]. 1m scale.



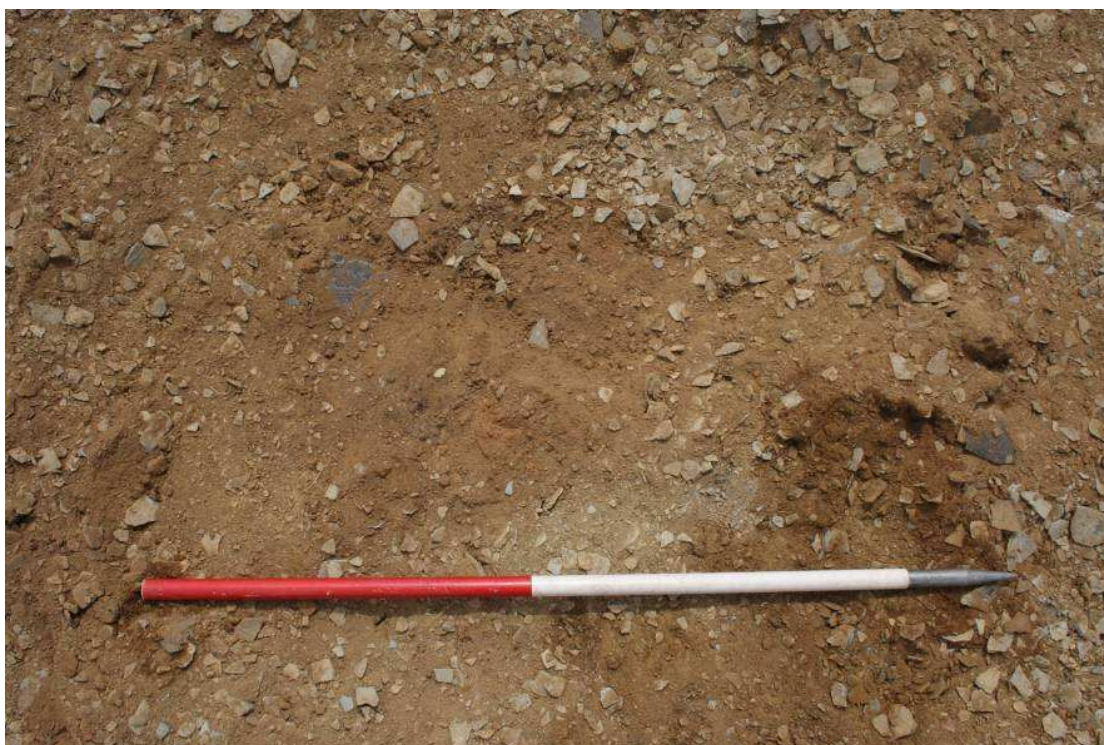


**Photo.7:** View of posthole [103]. 1m scale.

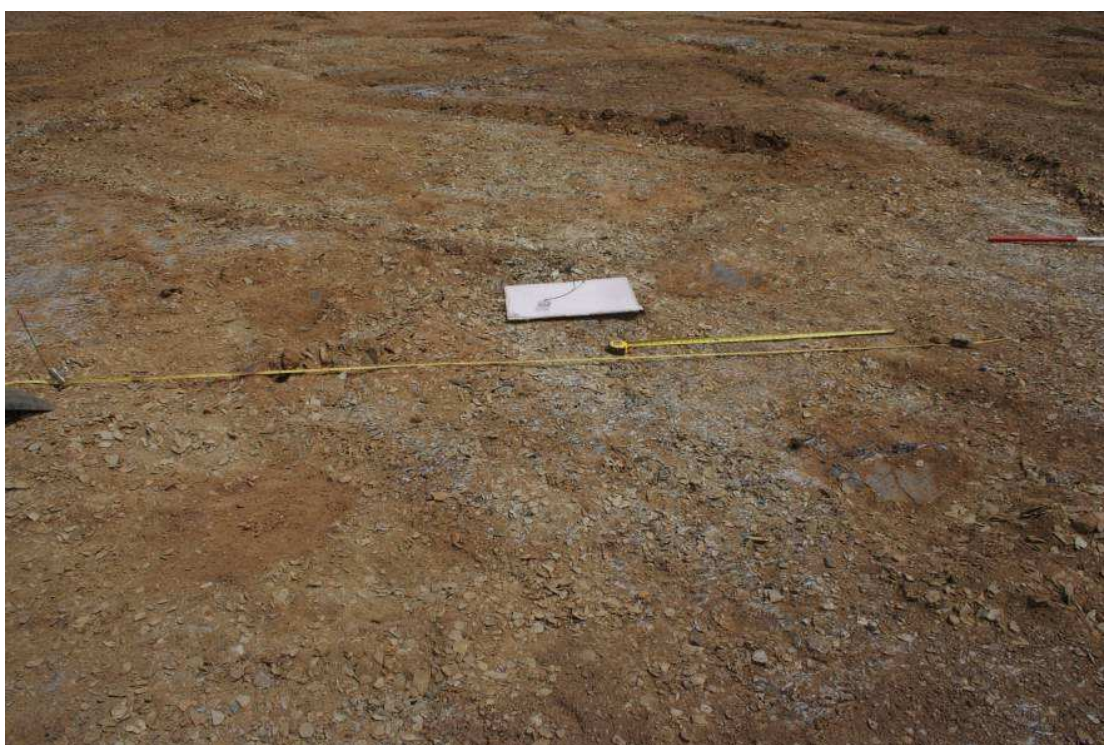


**Photo.8:** view of posthole [105]. 1m scale.





**Photo. 9:** View of posthole [114]. 1m scale.



**Photo. 10:** General working shot during recording of four posthole setting facing east.





**Photo 11:** Pre-excavation view of posthole [108]. 1m scale.



**Photo 12:** View of half-sectioned posthole [108].





**Photo.13:** View of posthole [110].



**Photo.14:** View of western field boundary's herring bone patterning on its eastern exterior.

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**James Meek**

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on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Head of Field Services

Llofnod / Signature ..... Date

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

*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*