

# **CEFN GARN BARROW, CEREDIGION: GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY, TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY & ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2018**



*Cefn Garn Barrow.*

Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
For: Cadw



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**CEFN GARN BARROW,  
CEREDIGION: GEOPHYSICAL  
SURVEY, TOPOGRAPHICAL  
SURVEY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION 2018**

Gan / By

**Charles Enright**

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## **CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL**

*Ar ddechrau 2018, cynhaliodd Ymddiriedolaeth Archeolegol Dyfed arolwg ac ymgymryd â chloddfa brawf ar raddfa fechan ar dwmpath crwn yng Nghefn Garn yn nyffryn Afon Arth, Ceredigion. Ni chanfuwyd fawr ddim o ddiddordeb gan yr arolwg Geoffisegol, ond datgelodd y gloddfa dwmpath caregog o wneuthuriad da, gan gadarnhau bod y cofadail bron yn sicr yn feddrod crwn o'r Oes Efydd oedd yn 15m mewn diamedr a 0.75m o uchder.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*In early 2018 Dyfed Archaeological Trust surveyed and carried out small-scale trial excavation on a circular mound at Cefn Garn in the Afon Arth valley, Ceredigion. Geophysical survey detected little of interest, but the excavation revealed a well-made, stony mound, confirming that the monument is almost certainly a Bronze Age round barrow 15m diameter and 0.75m high.*

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GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY, TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY AND  
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**CEFN GARN BARROW, CEREDIGION: GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY,  
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**SUMMARY**

*Cefn Garn Barrow (PRN 110510; NPRN 422081) is a potential Bronze Age burial mound situated below a local summit and on a crest above the Afon Arth Valley, in Ceredigion (NGR SN 58001 62292). The possible Bronze Age burial mound sits within a pasture field and due to its location it has been causing problems for machinery taking hay off the field. The site owners were aware that the feature could be of archaeological significance and had discussed the possibility of its removal with RCAHMS, highlighting that the feature could be under threat of removal.*

*In 2018 Cadw grant aided a project to evaluate the site to ascertain whether it was a burial mound or not. It was proposed that the archaeological work would be the minimum sufficient to characterise the site, and to inform a future programme of management and potential scheduling.*

*The mound is currently better preserved on its western edge (the uphill side); some slumping appears to be occurring on the downhill edge of the mound.*

*The geophysical survey did not detect anything of archaeological significance within the area of the mound. Even the mound itself was difficult to discern, which is not unsurprising for a possible stone built burial mound with no associated ditch. Some positive anomalies were detected within the immediate vicinity of the mound which could be associated with burials but it is not possible to confirm this without intrusive works.*

*Following geophysical and topographic survey of the surviving mound, a hand excavated test slot was excavated on its southwestern side, to remove topsoil and expose underlying deposits. This revealed a substantial stone deposit below topsoil, supporting the hypothesis that Cefn Garn barrow is indeed a prehistoric burial mound, more specifically a Bronze Age cairn.*

*There was no evidence of a buried turf, kerbing or ring ditch, suggesting the mound comprised only of a stone built cairn that gradually became denuded and silted up, covering the cairn overtime.*

*In conclusion, this project has ascertained the mound was artificial and that it shares characteristics to other Bronze Age burial mounds. The integrity of the mound was not comprised during the course of this investigation and the monument is recommended for scheduling. The mound is currently fairly well preserved but without the protection of scheduled status the burial mound may be under threat of further disturbance or removal during hay removal.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Commission**

- 1.1.1 Cefn Garn Barrow (PRN 110510; NPRN 422081) is a possible Bronze Age round barrow located at approximately 270mOD below a local summit and on a crest above the Afon Arth Valley centred on NGR SN 58001 62292 ; Figure 1). In this position the barrow has spectacular views along the valley and towards the Ceredigion coastline (Photo 1).
- 1.1.2 The site has not previously been recognised as a prehistoric round barrow but during site visits in the summer of 2017 (initially by RCAHMW and later by Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) its potential was highlighted. During the site visit by DAT the mound was recorded as being a well-defined roughly circular ring with a depressed middle, measuring between 13 – 14m in diameter and around 0.25m high and composed of earth and stone in a pasture / hay field (Pyper 2017). The north side of the mound appears to be badly eroded with some slumping occurring where it meets the downhill slope.
- 1.1.3 Due to its location in the middle of a pasture field it is causing problems for machinery taking hay off the field and the owner was considering flattening it, and so sought advice from RCAHMW as to whether this was appropriate. However, the land owner is not adverse to retaining it and having it legally protected if it could be demonstrated that it is a prehistoric monument.
- 1.1.4 In 2017 Cadw grant aided a project to evaluate the site to ascertain whether it is a burial mound or not. It was proposed that the archaeological work would be the minimum sufficient to characterise the site, and to inform its management and potential scheduling.



**Photo 1:** Views from Cefn Garn Barrow westwards towards the Ceredigion coastline across the Afon Arth Valley.

## **1.2. Project Aim and Objectives**

1.2.1 The aim of the project was:

- **to make a record of the site**

The objectives of the project were:

- **to provide information to assist in future management plans**
- **to produce a project report**

## **1.3 Report Outline**

1.3.1 This report provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological evaluation and its results, and puts those results within their regional and national context.

## **1.4 Abbreviations**

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Sites recorded on the National Monument Record (NMR) held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) are identified by their National Primary Record Number (NPRN). Scheduled Monument (SM). Altitude is expressed to Ordnance Datum (OD). References to cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets throughout the text, with full details listed in the sources section at the rear of the report.

## **1.5 Illustrations**

1.5.1 Printed map extracts are not necessarily produced to their original scale.



## 1.6 Timeline

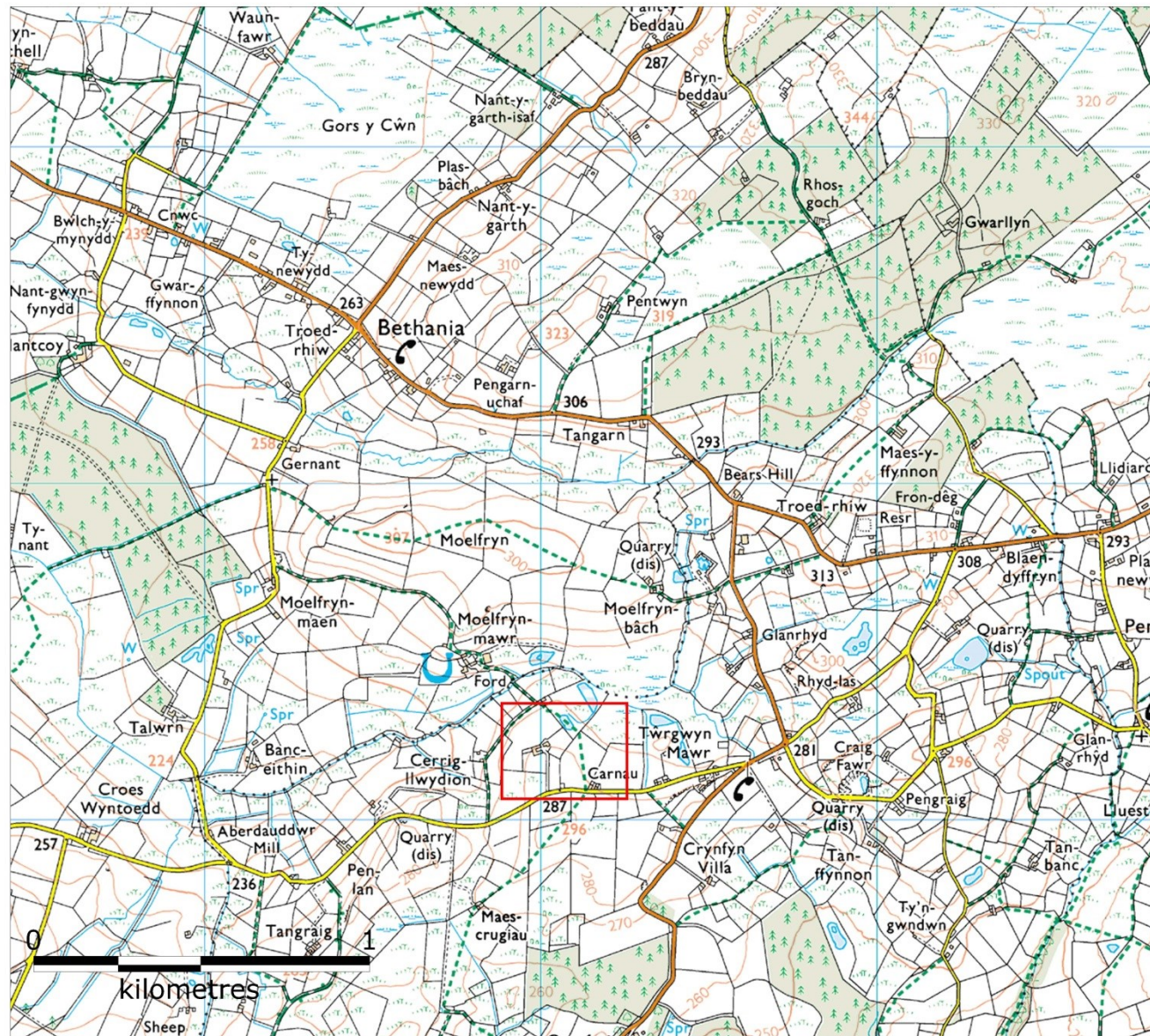
1.6.1 The following timeline (Table 1) is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text.

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1086	
Medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period <sup>1</sup> –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20 <sup>th</sup> century onwards	

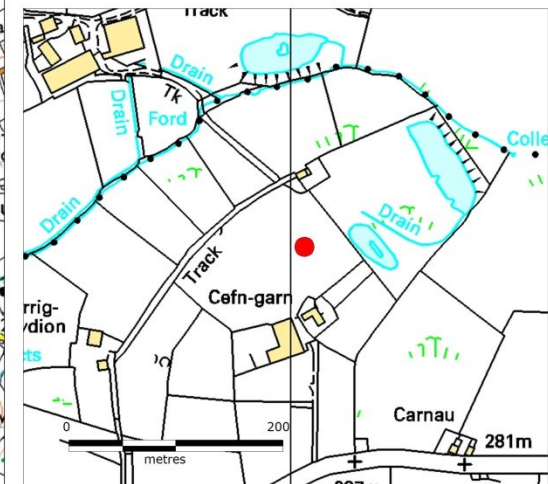
**Table 1:** Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust



**Figure 1:** Location map of Cefn Garn Barrow





## **2. THE SITE**

### **2.1 Site Location and Topography**

- 2.1.1 The possible Bronze Age burial mound (PRN 110510) lies in a pasture field (NGR SN 58001 62292) at between 270mOD to 280mOD, on a north facing slope below a local summit and on a crest above the Afon Arth Valley.
- 2.1.2 The site is observable as low, mound (approximately 0.25m high). The mound is a well-defined circular shape measuring between 12 – 15m in diameter. The mound appears to be better preserved on its western and southern edge towards the uphill slope (Photo 2). Along its northeastern edge, towards the downhill slope the mound peters out and is virtually non-existent.
- 2.1.3 The underling bedrock geology consists of Myndd Bach Formation – Sandstone and Mudstone. Formed approximately 433 – 444 million years ago, formed in areas previously dominated by deep seas. The superficial deposits consist of peat, formed up to three million years ago.



**Photo 2:** The better preserved edge of Cefn Garn barrow on the uphill slope (west side).

### **2.2 Archaeological Background**

- 2.2.1 In total there are 17 known archaeological sites recorded in the Historic Environment Record (HER) within 1km of the Cefn Garn mound. Out of these, 14 records relate to post-medieval activity and are illustrated in Figure 2 and Table 2.
- 2.2.2 A pleasant climate and fertile soils in the Afon Arth Valley would have almost certainly attracted the attention of early settlers, despite this evidence of prehistoric activity in the area is scarce. The nearest recorded prehistoric barrow to Cefn Garn is Maes Crugia (PRN 8150), which is

located approximately 0.6km to the southwest. The only other known prehistoric activity within 1km is limited to two crop marks (PRNs 8691 and 5960) identified to the north of Cefn Garn, each of which has been labelled as being of unknown significance. Even extending the search radius to 2km will return only a handful of prehistoric sites, all being cropmarks of unknown significance.

- 2.2.3 This lack of observed prehistoric activity is probably more likely to be due to a lack of investigative research being able to identify sites in the area as opposed to a true reflection of an actual absence of prehistoric activity.
- 2.2.4 Recent work on sites in similar topographic locations, fairly close by, have revealed evidence for round barrows to be present on lower slopes of hills, such as this, as opposed to merely being located on their summits (Davies *et al* 2015).

PRN	Site Name	Site Type	Period	NGR
5960	TAN GARN UCHAF	Cropmark	Prehistoric	SN58126322
5961	PEN CNWC	Cropmark	Prehistoric	SN58416284
7047	CARNAU	Cottage	Post-medieval	SN58176210
8150	MAES CRUGIAU	Round Barrow	Bronze Age	SN578617
9060	GLAN-YR-AFON	Cottage	Post-medieval	SN58416308
9216	MOELFRYN-BACH	Cottage	Post-medieval	SN58176286
9218	ABERDAUDDWR	Cottage	Post-medieval	SN57196190
9219	GLAN-YR-AFON	Cottage	Post-medieval	SN57576224
9220	EGLWYS-FACH	Cottage	Post-medieval	SN57506204
13662	CAE-TON-FAILER	Common Land	Post-medieval, Medieval	SN587622
19434		Quarry	Post-medieval	SN5759261996
19440		Quarry	Post-medieval	SN5847762763
19444		Quarry	Post-medieval	SN58906210
19445		Quarry	Post-medieval	SN5830861803
19529		Chapel	Post-medieval	SN58736223
21280	CRYNFRYN	Mansion	Post-medieval	SN58256137
107120	BEARS HILL	Smallholding	Post-medieval	SN58586297

**Table 2:** Known archaeological sites recorded on the HER within 1km of Cefn Garn Barrow (illustrated in Figure 2).

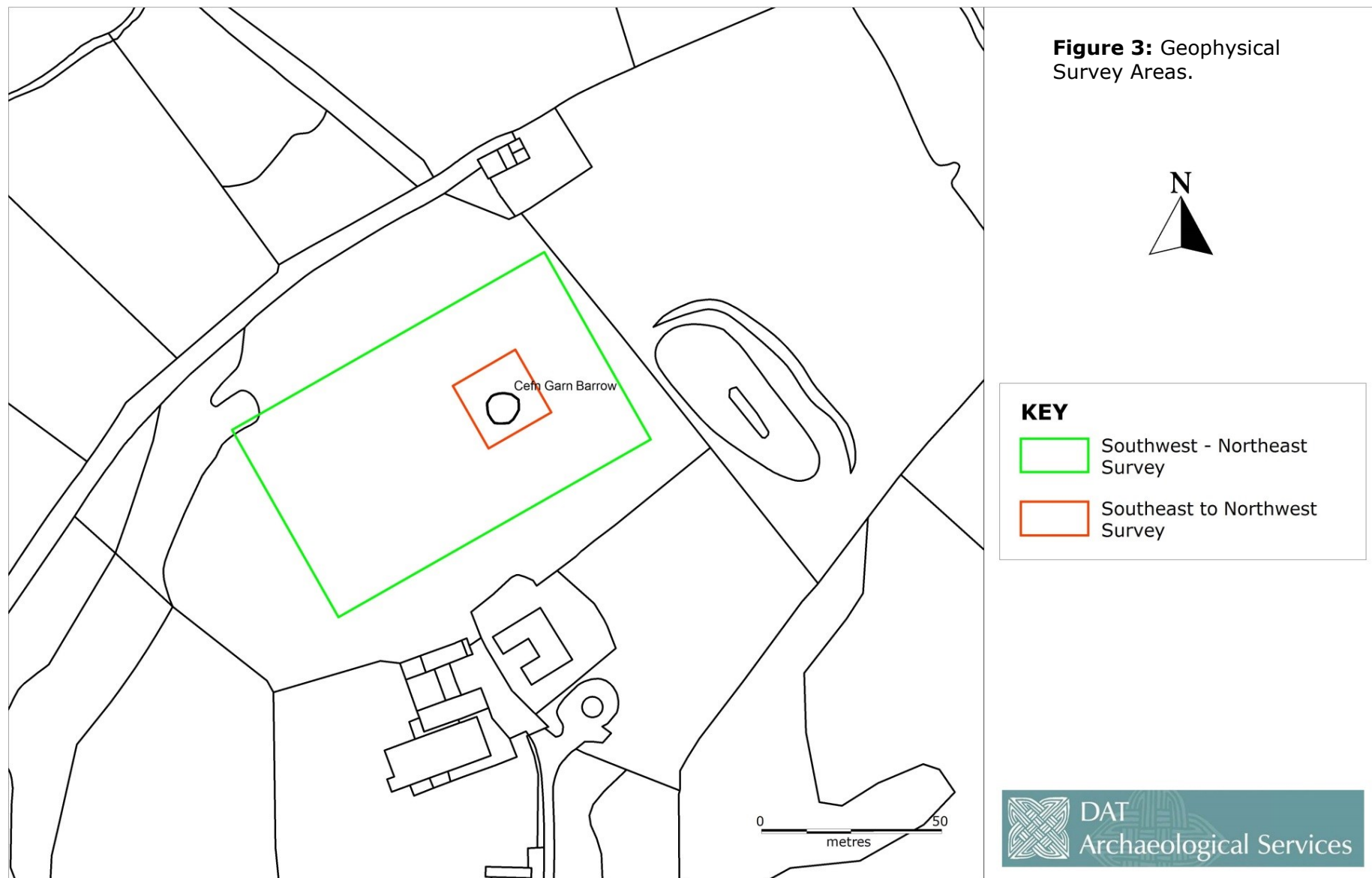




### **3. GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

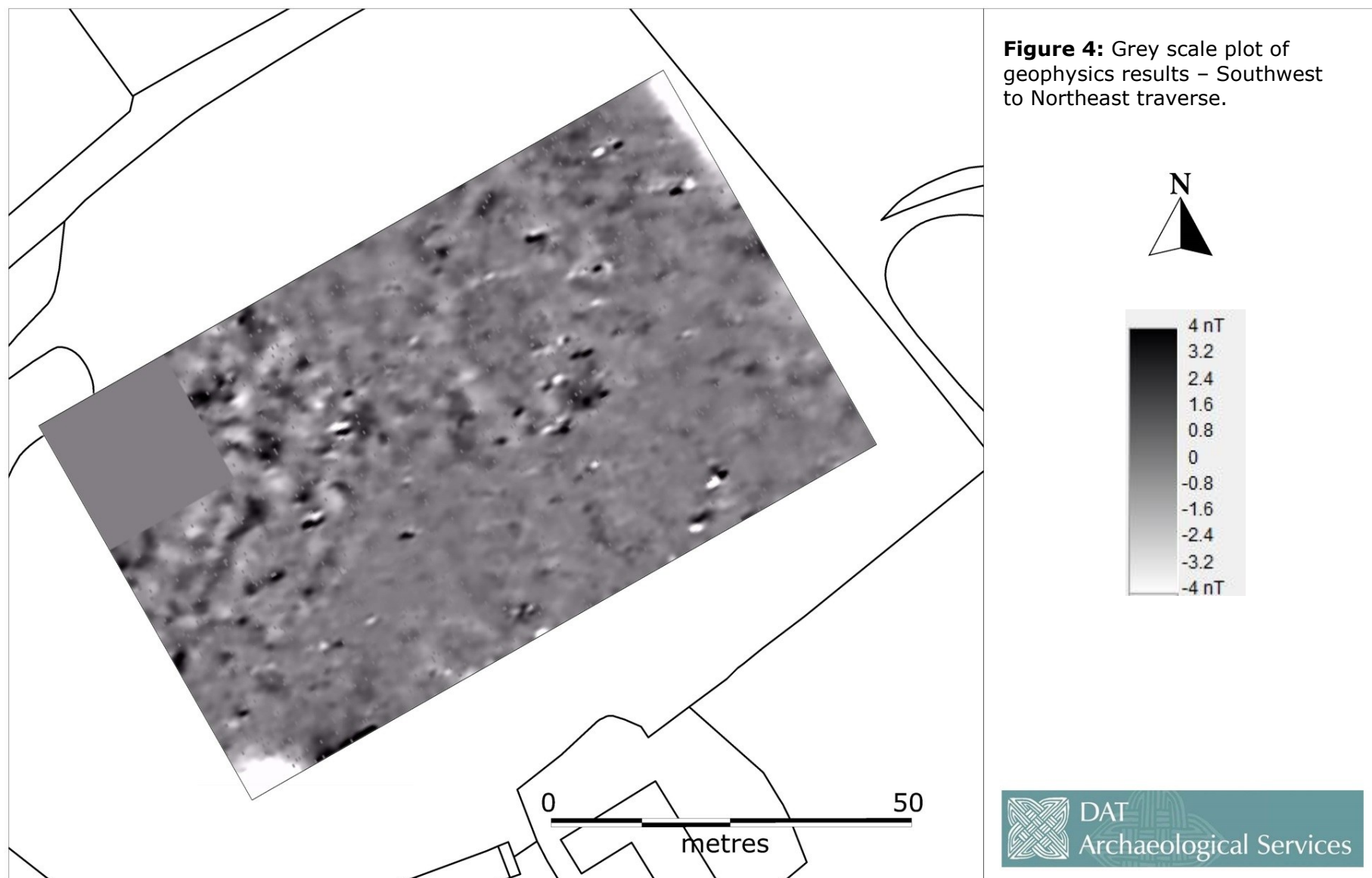
- 3.1.1 A fluxgate gradiometer with a DL601 data logger was used to conduct the detailed geophysical survey, which detects variations in the earth's magnetic field. A sample interval of 0.25m (four readings per metre) was used with 0.5m wide traverses across 20m x 20m grids using the zigzag traverse method of collecting data. The gradiometers sensitivity was set to detect a magnetic variation in the order of 0.1 nanoTesla.
- 3.1.2 The survey grid was tied in to the local Ordnance Survey grid using a Trimble 5600 electronic distance measuring total station and theodolite (TST).
- 3.1.3 The survey was initially conducted with a southwest to northeast traverse across Cefn Garn barrow and the surrounding area (approximately 1 acre). A second survey was then conducted along southeast to northwest traverses within the immediate vicinity of the barrow (See Figure 3 for illustration of survey areas).
- 3.1.4 The data was processed using *Terrasurveyor 3.0* and is presented with a minimum of processing. The presence of high values caused by ferrous objects, which tend to hide fine details and obscure archaeological features, have been 'clipped' to remove the extreme values allowing the finer details to show through.
- 3.1.5 The processed data has been presented as a grey-scale plot, overlaid on local topographical features. The main magnetic anomalies have been identified and an interpretation of those results is also given.
- 3.1.6 The resulting survey results and interpretation diagrams should not be seen as a definitive model of what lies beneath the ground surface, not all buried features will provide a magnetic response that can be identified by the gradiometer. In interpreting those features that are recorded the shape is the principal diagnostic tool, along with comparison with known features from other surveys. The intensity of the magnetic response could provide further information, a strong response for example indicates burning, high ferric content or thermoremnancy in geology. The context may provide further clues but the interpretation of many of these features is still largely subjective.
- 3.1.7 All measurements given will be approximate as accurate measurements are difficult to determine from fluxgate gradiometer surveys. The width and length of identified features can be affected by its relative depth and magnetic strength.



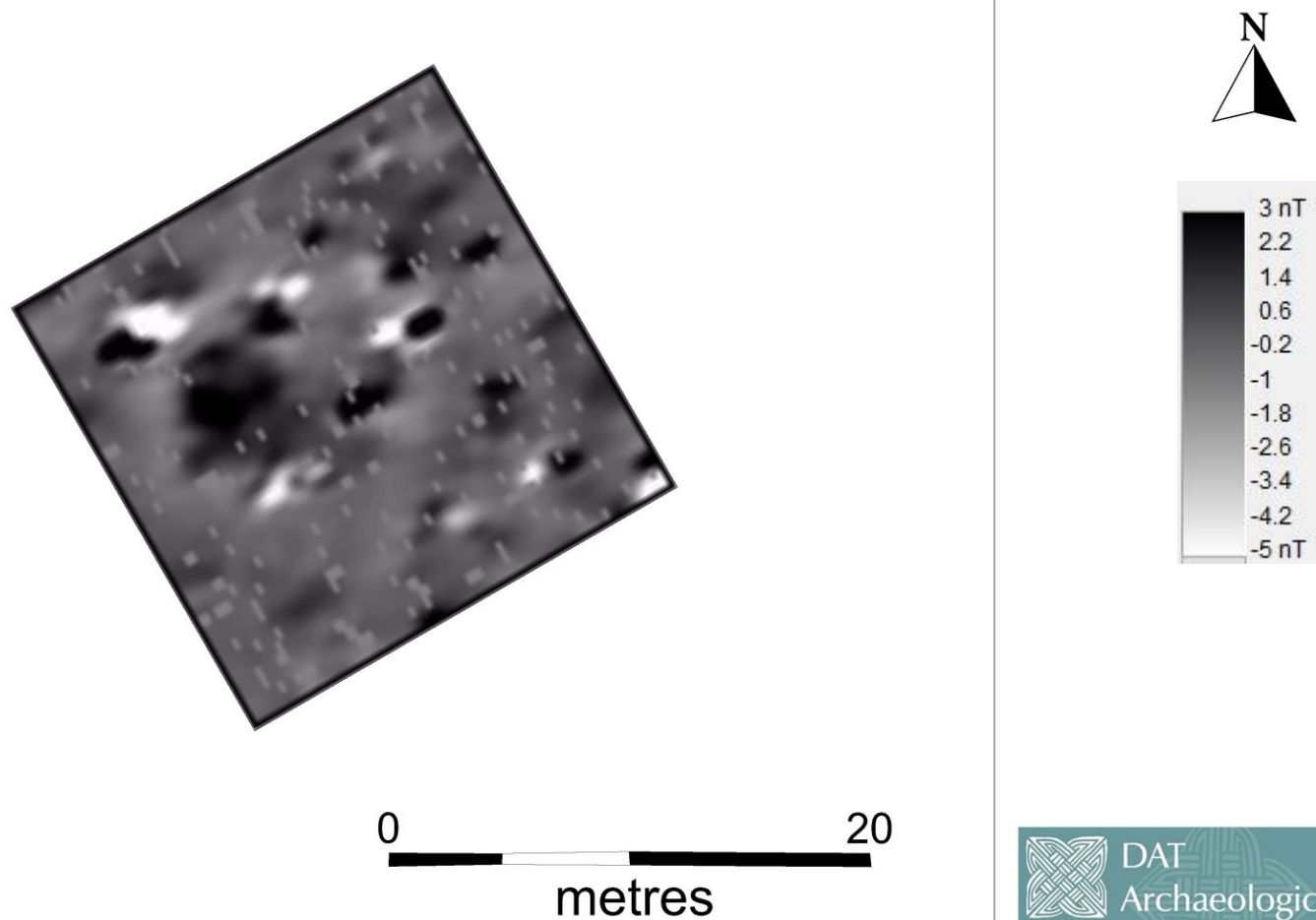
## **3.2 Results**

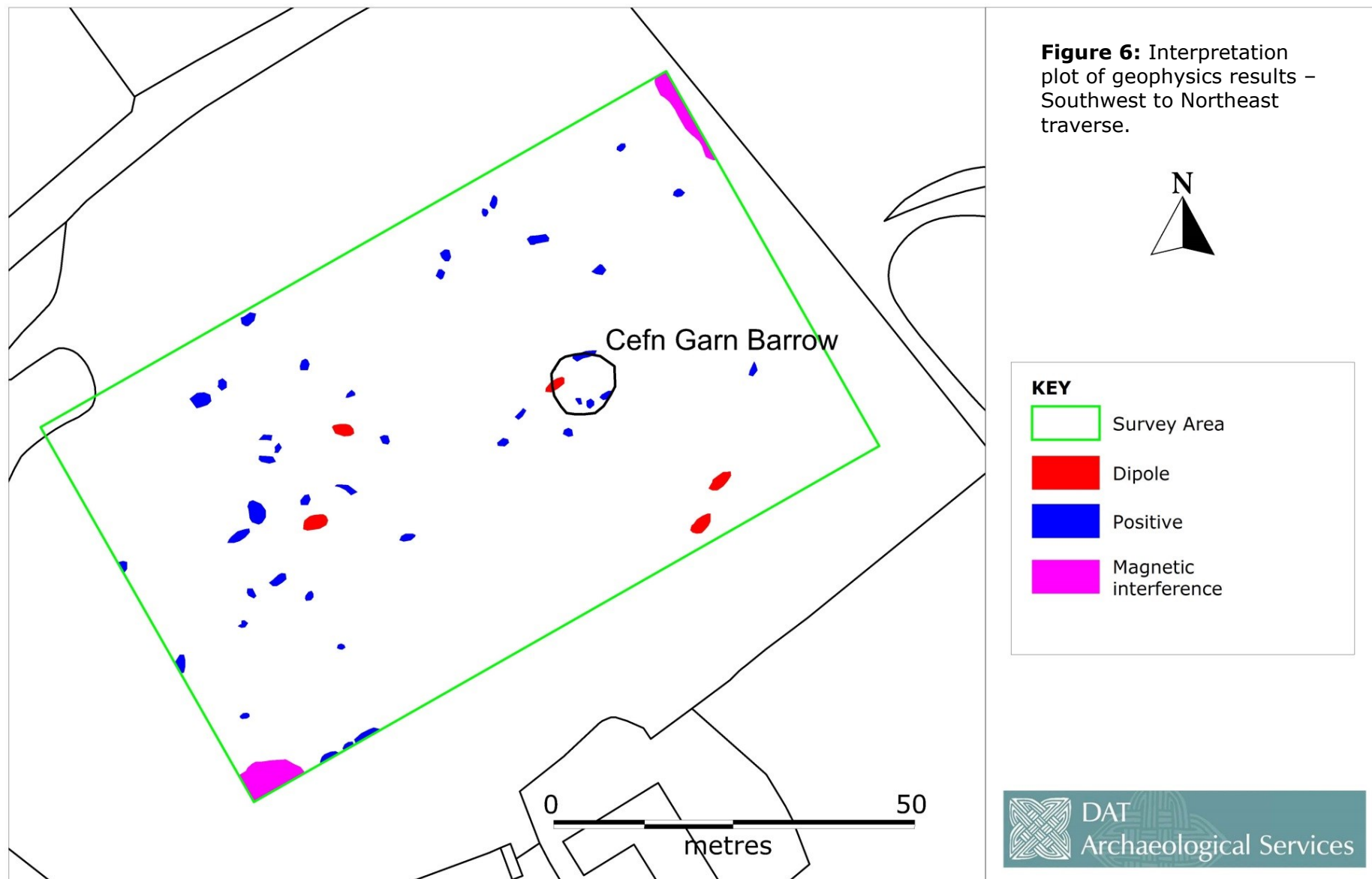
- 3.2.1 The geophysical survey was conducted on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2018 in dry weather. A greyscale plot of the geophysical results can be seen in Figures 4 and 5 with interpretations in Figures 6 and 7.
- 3.2.2 Generally a series of discrete dipole anomalies were seen across the survey area. Such anomalies consist of a single positive response with an associated negative response forming a 'halo effect'. The negative and positive response is of equal magnitude but opposite polarity and are caused by the same feature. Dipole anomalies are very commonly observed across a range of sites, particularly agricultural land. They are usually the result of modern ferrous rich debris such as brick and tile fragments as well as horse shoe and plough shares, which lie just below or on the surface.
- 3.2.3 A number of discrete positive pit-like anomalies can be seen throughout the area. Although there is some potential for them to be of archaeological origin it is also possible that they are a natural feature of the geology or a tree throw.
- 3.2.4 The Cefn Garn barrow itself is difficult to discern in the geophysical results. This is not unsurprising given that it constructed from stone. No evidence of a ring ditch surrounding the mound was detected. There are a number of positive pit-like features within the immediate vicinity of the barrow which could possibly be associated with burials, further intrusive investigation would need to be undertaken to confirm this.
- 3.2.5 No other archaeological features were recorded within the area surrounding the barrow.

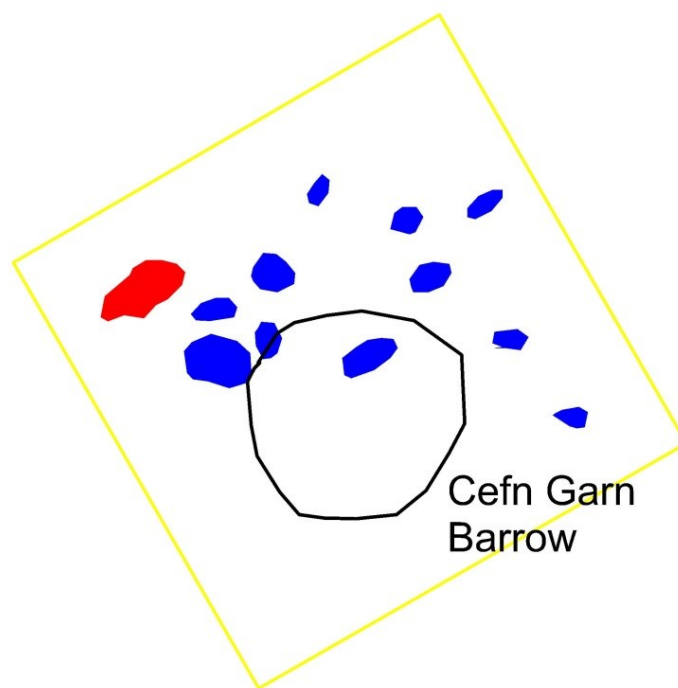




**Figure 5:** Grey scale plot of geophysics results – Southeast to Northwest traverse.










**Figure 7:** Interpretation plot of geophysics results – Southeast to Northwest traverse.



**KEY**

-  Survey Area
-  Dipole
-  Positive

#### **4. TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY**

##### **4.1 Methodology**

- 4.1.1 The topographical survey was conducted using a Trimble 5600 TST to acquire 3-dimensional data. It was conducted across the immediate vicinity of the barrow (approximately an area of 60m x 60m size) to record changes in ground level across the site area and also to record the profile and layout of the visible remains of the Cefn Garn barrow.
- 4.1.2 Transects were recorded across the entire site area from east to west, with more detailed recording within the area of the barrow.
- 4.1.3 The TST records 3-dimensional coordinates of the tops and bottoms of slopes and visible earthworks in the field. The data has been used to produce a contour map using approximate levels in relation to ordnance datum. A more general hachure plan has also been produced (Figure 10).

##### **4.2 Results**

- 4.2.1 The mound sits at approximately 270mOD below the summit of a hill. The visible earthwork of the mound is readily identifiable in the results of the topographical survey. The mound sits on the upper more gentle slopes of the hill, to the north of the mound the natural slope becomes much steeper.
- 4.2.2 The mound is much wider between the north and east as a result of slippage where it meets the downhill slope.
- 4.2.3 Undulations on top of the mound may represent evidence of previous excavations, or could be the result of natural slumpage.

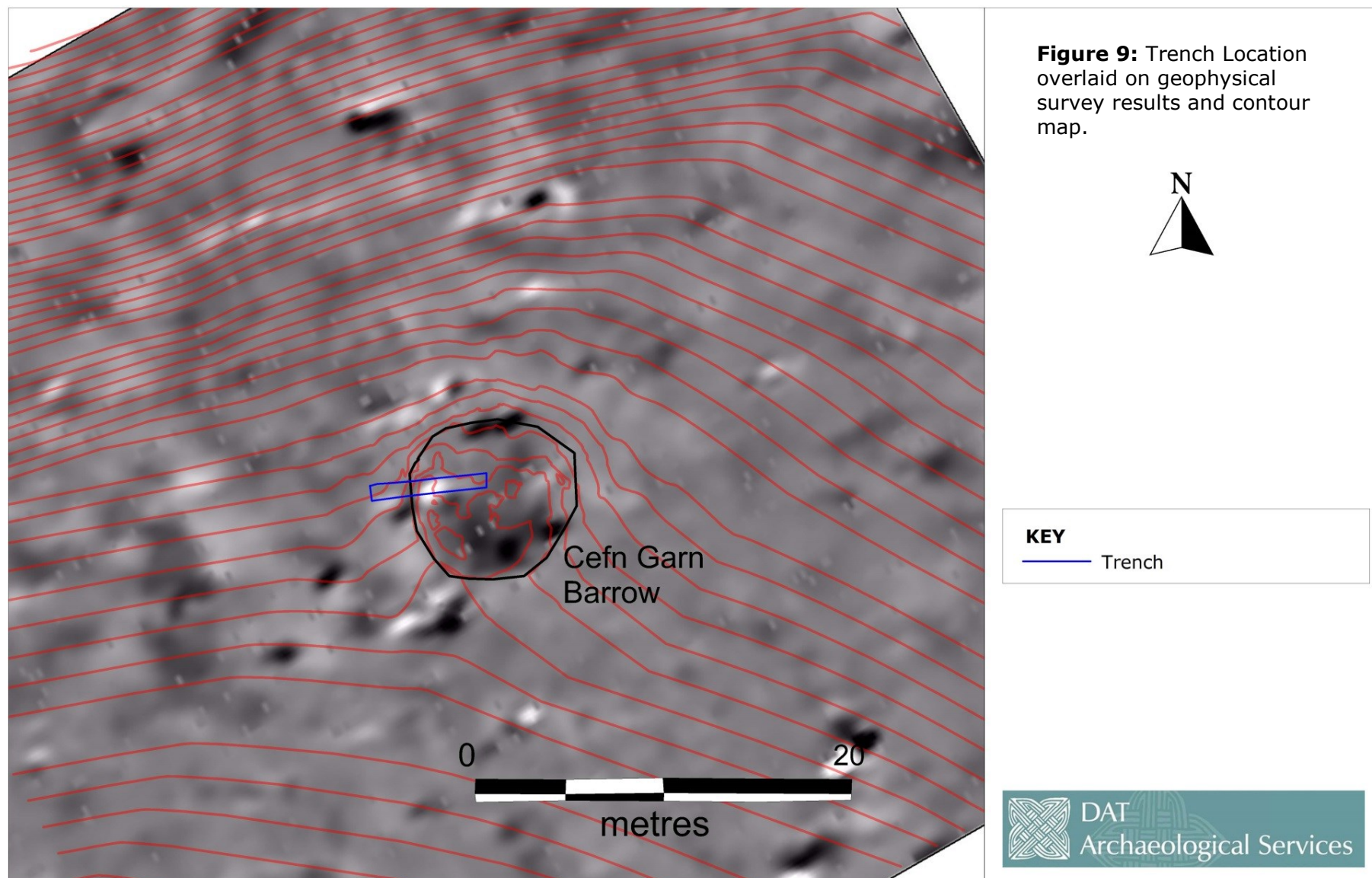


## **5. EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Methodology**

- 5.1.1 The evaluation was carried out following the geophysical and contour surveys. The archaeological work involved the minimal amount of excavation that would ensure the site was adequately characterised whilst causing minimal disturbance to the surviving remains. All excavation was done by hand.
- 5.1.2 The small amount of turf overlying the mound was removed across a trench measuring 6m x 0.75m on the western edge of the mound where it was better preserved (Figure 9). The turf was kept to one side in order that it could be replaced upon the end of the excavation.
- 5.1.3 The opened area was fully cleaned using hand tools to expose the deposits below the turf.
- 5.1.4 Some minimal excavation and removal of exposed deposits was carried out to characterise the construction of the mound and define a probable edge.
- 5.1.5 All archaeological deposits and features were recorded by archaeological context record sheet, scale drawing/detailed survey, photography and site notebooks. A digital photographic record was maintained.
- 5.1.6 All individual archaeological deposits or features were numbered using the open-ended numbering system. Each numbered deposit was described and is shown within rounded brackets () in the text. A summary of the descriptions are listed in Appendix I.
- 5.1.7 Recording of all archaeological structures, features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust.
- 5.1.8 A Trimble 5600 TST was used to record the trench location.
- 5.1.9 The trench was backfilled at the end of the excavation with the material removed. All turf was replaced as near to its original position as possible.
- 5.1.10 This evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014).







## **5.2 RESULTS**

- 5.2.1 The evaluation was carried out in relatively dry weather with some snow showers over 2 days from 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018.
- 5.2.2 A single trench measuring 6m x 0.75m was aligned roughly east to west on the western edge of the barrow (Photo 3).
- 5.2.3 The topsoil and turf (102) was removed by hand and placed to one side, it consisted of a very dark brown, silty clay. Over the cairn itself the turf was very thin, with a depth of just 0.06m. At the most western end of the trench, beyond the raised area of the barrow, the turf was up to 0.16m thick.
- 5.2.4 As the turf was removed a substantial deposit of stones (101) was observed lying immediately beneath (Photo 4). The stones were mostly sub angular and ranged in size from between 0.10m<sup>2</sup> to 0.30m<sup>2</sup>, there were also a few rare inclusions of quartz. These stones were the make-up of a hand built stone structure i.e. a cairn. The trench was hand cleaned in order to elucidate the archaeological remains further (Photo 5 and 6).
- 5.2.5 On the western edge of the cairn it appeared that some of the stones may have slumped. This apparent slump material was carefully removed until it was possible to define a conceivable edge of the cairn (Photo 7), although no kerb was identified.
- 5.2.6 To the west of the cairn the natural ground (103) was exposed directly beneath the topsoil consisting of a firm, mottled grey/orange silty clay. It would appear that the cairn was constructed directly above it.
- 5.2.7 No evidence of a ring ditch around the cairn was observed, supporting the results of the geophysical survey.
- 5.2.8 No artefacts were recovered during this evaluation and no burials were observed. No well-sealed deposits suitable for environmental sampling were excavated during the evaluation.
- 5.2.9 At the end of the excavation the trench was backfilled with the material removed from the trench. All turf was replaced as near to its original position as possible (Photo 9).



**Photo 3:** Area of Trench marked out before excavation.  
View east



**Photo 4:** Stones exposed immediately beneath  
turf (before cleaning).





**Photo 5:** Exposed cairn after hand cleaning. View Northwest.



**Photo 6:** Exposed cairn after hand cleaning. View east.





**Photo 7:** After removal of tumbled stone to probable edge of cairn. View north.

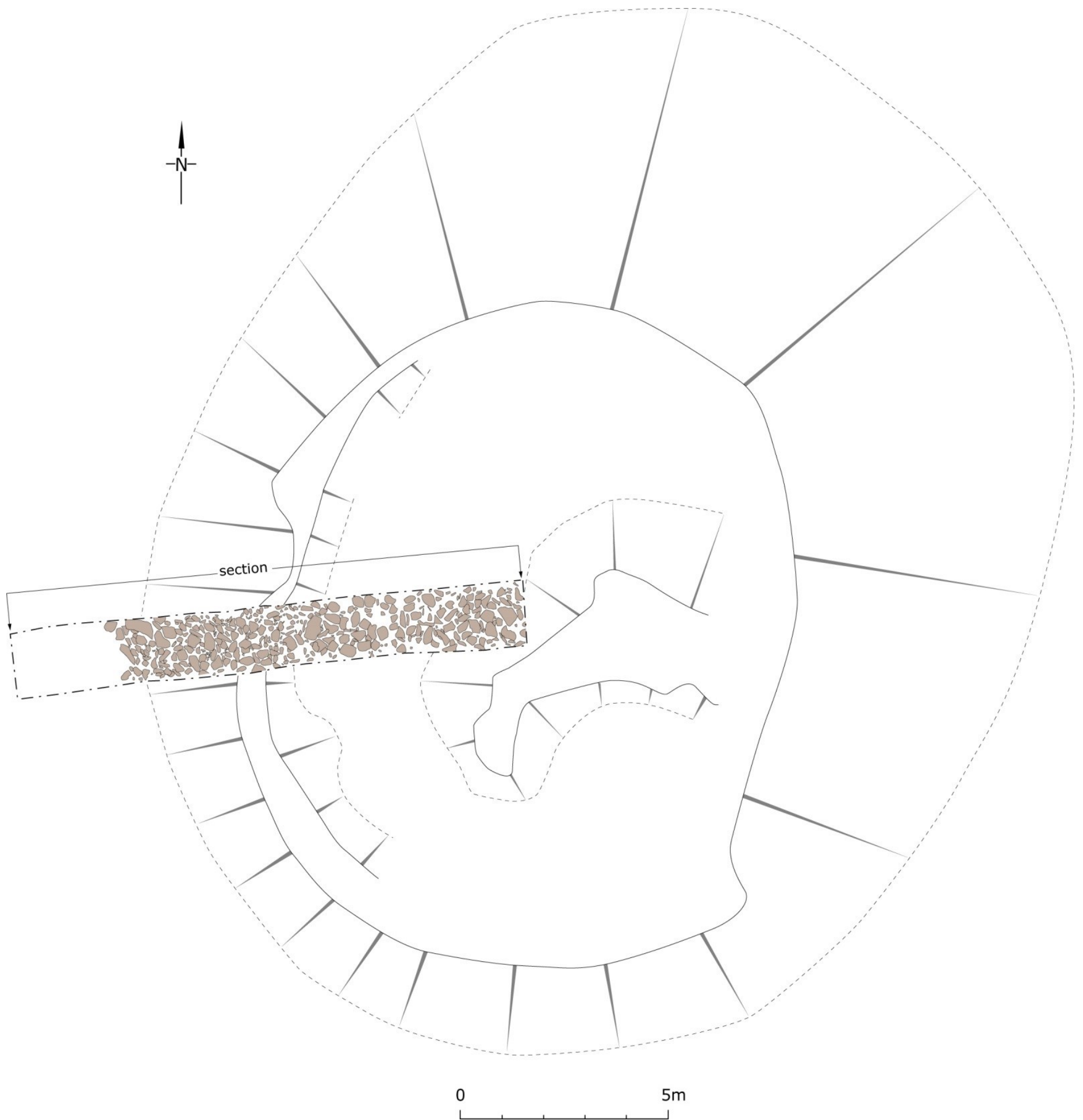


**Photo 8:** After removal of tumbled stone to probable edge of cairn. View east.

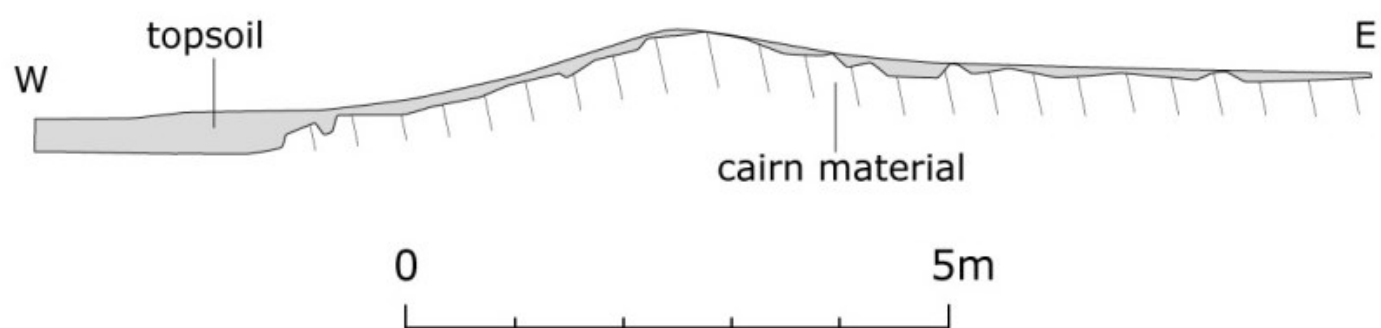




**Photo 9:** Trench after re-turfing. View east.



**Figure 10:** Plan drawing of Cefn Garn Barrow excavation trench, showing interpretation of eartworks.



**Figure 11:** Section drawing of Cefn Garn Barrow excavation trench, south facing

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 The results of this investigation strongly support the hypothesis that the earthwork known as Cefn Garn barrow is indeed a Prehistoric burial mound. More specifically, the construction method used would suggest it is the remains of a Bronze Age cairn. Such monuments are thought to represent a range of purposes but most commonly have been found to act as funerary monuments. Their significance is considered high as it is thought that they reflect a transitional period from nomadic to sedentary communities, whereby people were beginning to form attachment to land and the desire to have a permanent monument that reflects this. Their identification is often rare, as they are very prone to destruction from ploughing.
- 6.2 The evaluation has demonstrated that the burial mound at Cefn Garn was constructed from a stone built cairn built directly upon the natural ground. There was no evidence of a turf or soil mound overlying the cairn, suggesting that the stones may have originally been left exposed, gradually becoming covered with a thin layer of soil overtime.
- 6.3 No indications of a surviving buried soil were observed within the evaluation trench, although it must be noted that only limited excavation was undertaken, and the main cairn structure was not removed. The potential for earlier buried soil remains to survive beneath the main area of the mound cannot be discounted.
- 6.4 The burial mound is in fairly good condition, but some erosion is occurring on the downhill slope on its northwestern edge and it could benefit from some remedial work to stabilize its condition in this area.
- 6.5 During the evaluation no evidence of a ring ditch was observed, supporting the results of the geophysical survey.
- 6.6 The integrity of the burial mound was not compromised during the course of this investigation. Given its current condition it is worthy of scheduling so that it can continue to be preserved. Without being offered the protection of scheduled status it is unlikely to survive many more seasons of hay collection and associated vehicle traffic (pers. comm. from the land owner).

## **7. SOURCES**

### **Publications**

CIFA, 2014 *Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.*

National Standard and Guidance for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales 2017.  
<http://www.welshmuseumsfederation.org/en/news-archive/resources-landing/Collections/national-standard-and-guidance-for-collecting-and-depositing-archaeological-archives-in-wales-2017.html>

### **Database**

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record

### **Online resources**

British Geological Survey: [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)



## **APPENDIX I**

### **Project Archive**

Project Number: Cadw DAT A215

ERN: DAT111229

128 x Digital photographs (64 x JPEGs, 64 x TIFFs)

1x Photo catalogue

Survey data- 3 GS5 files

### **Context Register**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
101	Substantial deposit of small and medium sub angular stones.	Stone cairn
102	Very dark brown, silty clay.	Turf and topsoil
103	Firm, mottled grey/orange silty clay	Natural ground

# CEFN GARN BARROW, CEREDIGION: GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY, TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2018/03  
RHIF Y DIGWYDDIAD / EVENT RECORD NO. 111229

CADW PROJECT NO. DAT152

Chwefror 2018  
February 2018

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

**Charles Enright**

Swydd / Position: DAT Archaeologist

Llofnod / Signature .....  Dyddiad / Date 20/02/18

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: **Director Dyfed Archaeological Trust**

Llofnod / Signature .....  Dyddiad / Date 20/02/18

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

