



ST DAVID'S AIRFIELD: Studying the Significance of Lost Landscapes in a Second World War Airfield Site in Pembrokeshire



Vivienne Blandford

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree in Landscape Archaeology in the Faculty of Arts, September 2008.

Word Count: 10980

ABSTRACT

St David's Airfield was one of several airfields in Pembrokeshire which were in use for a short time during the second half of the Second World War. It now lies within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park and is owned by the Park Authority. As a military aviation site it has left a unique imprint on the Pembrokeshire landscape.

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority bought most of the airfield in 1996 and commenced restoration works. Early management plan decisions were made on purely ecological grounds with the desire to obliterate the scars left on the landscape by the airfield. In reviewing the management plan it became clear that integrated management plans are vital to manage and preserve such sites in a more holistic way.

Today there is nothing left of the settlements that were demolished to make way for the airfield, and little remains of the airfield itself. In the ten years that have lapsed since the decisions were made to return the land to a former more 'natural' site thinking has changed with the realisation that Second World War sites are now regarded with greater archaeological interest and, if not worth preserving, they should be recorded where possible. The former settlements of the pre-airfield site should also be recorded for these are the truly 'forgotten' landscapes.

In this study the effect of these events on the people who live or lived on or in the surrounding area have been studied to better understand that 'sense of place' in order to preserve the intangible values of the site.

Dedication and acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to those people who lost their lives and their livelihoods in this quiet corner of Pembrokeshire.

I would like to thank:

Polly Groom, archacologist of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

(For the work experience opportunity to carry out this project)

Philip Lees, warden of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

(For local knowledge and enthusiasm for the project)

Daniel Scott-Davies at Hendon RAF Museum

Staff at Haverfordwest Record Office and Library

Medwyn Parry of the National Library of Wales for the aerial photographs

National Archives, Kew

John Schofield of English Heritage

John Evans of the Sunderland Trust for invaluable photographs from his collection

Roger Thomas of English Heritage

Members of my family, Chris, Fiona and Rafe, for their support

I would also like to thank all the local people who were willing to talk to me about their memories of the St David's airfield site and the public who willingly and enthusiastically helped me by answering the questionnaire.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION:

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represents those of the University of Bristol.

This dissertation has not been presented to any other university for examination in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED:

Q Blandford

DATE: 30/09/2008

CONTENTS:

1	SUMMARY	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Methodology	2
1.3	Outcome	2
2	INTRODUCTION	3
2.1	Overview of the site and its setting	3
2.2	Geology and Landform	4
2.3	Landscape Character	4
3	ST DAVID'S AIRFIELD (understanding the site)	7
3.1	Recorded Archaeology	7
3.2	Treflodan and Llechell	7
3.3	Tithe Details and 1901 Census Returns	8
3.4	Land Utilisation and Farm Surveys	8
3.5	Llechell, Treflodan and Llanwngar Farm Surveys	9
3.6	Local Memories	9
3.7	Summary	10
3.8	Landscape in Change	13
4	COASTAL COMMAND	14
4.1	Introduction	14
4.2	Battle of the Atlantic	14
4.3	Coastal Command in Pembrokeshire	14
4.4	Impact of Second World War on Pembrokeshire Landscape	15
5	HISTORY OF ST DAVID'S AIRFIELD	17
5.1	Airfield Construction-local memories	17
5.2	Airfield Construction-layout	18
5.3	Operational Station	19
5.4	St David's Reconstructed	22
5.5	August 1943 to September 1944	25
5.6	Fatalities	26
5.7	End of Active Service	27
5.8	Local Memories	27

6	AFTER THE WAR	28
6.1	Early Days-1950's	28
6.2	Future of Airfield and Dispersed Sites	29
7	FROM BOMBERS TO SKYLARKS	33
7.1	Phase 1 of the National Parks Management Plan	33
7.2	Phase 11-Habitat Recreation	34
7.3	The Gorsedd	35
7.4	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Policy	35
8	AIRFIELD ARCHAEOLOGY TODAY	38
8.1	Understanding the Airfield Site today	38
8.2	What Remains	38
8.3	Summary	40
9	CRITIQUE OF RESTORATION WORKS	46
9.1	Ecological versus Archaeological	46
9.2	Hidden Views, Lost Meaning	46
9.3	Lack of Information	47
9.4	Possible Comprises	47
9.5	Outside the Airfield-Dispersed Sites	48
9.6	Conclusion	48
10	SURVEY	49
10.1	Findings	49
10.2	Conclusion	49
11	STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUES	50
11.1	National and Global Significance	50
11.2	Local Significance-Value of Military Aviation Sites	51
11.3	Vulnerability	52
12	FUTURE RESEARCH	54
13	CONCLUSION	55
14	REFERENCES	57
15	APPENDICES	
	Appendix A Farm Survey	A
	Appendix B Questionnaire and Media Interest	B

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES:

Figure 1	St David's Airfield Location Map	3
Figure 2	Modern Map of St David's Airfield	5
Figure 3	1 st Edition Ordnance Survey Map with airfield boundary	5
Figure 4	Tithe Map of Llechell and Treflodan	6
Figure 5	1908 Ordnance Survey Map of Llechell and Treflodan	6
Figure 6	1942 RAF Aerial Photograph	11
Figure 7	1934 Land Utilisation Survey	11
Figure 8	1943 MAFF Farm Survey Map	12
Figure 9	Pembrokeshire Second World War Airfields	17
Figure 10	St David's Airfield Wartime Site Plan	21
Figure 11	Dispersed Sites Plan	22
Figures 12-18	Reconstructing St David's Airfield	23
Table 1	Dispersed Sites Construction	24
Figure 19	Dispersed Sites Dereliction	30
Figure 20	Modern Map of Dispersed Sites	30
Figure 21-26	Dispersed Sites Today	31
Figures 27-31	Aerial Photographs of St David's Airfield 1950-1970	32
Figures 32-37	Understanding the Ecological Restoration	36
Figure 38	Map of current Airfield Boundaries, paths and hedges	37
Figure 39	Modern Aerial Photograph of Site	38
Figures 40-42	Runways	41
Figures 43-48	Fused Bomb Stores, perimeter tracks and footprints	42
Figures 49-53	Remains of Bomb Stores	43
Figures 54-59	Spectacle Dispersals, Workshops and Stores	44
Figure 60	Photographic Survey and Alternative Visitor Route	45
Figure 61	Skylark Landing	56

GLOSSARY

Gorsedd Stones	Groups of standing stones constructed for the National Eisteddfod of Wales. Each stone structure is arranged in a circular formation typically consisting of twelve stone pillars, sometimes from the local area and sometimes, the stones have been brought in to represent the Welsh counties. A large, flat-topped stone, known as the Logan Stone, lies at the centre of the circle and serves as a platform.
Eisteddfod	Welsh cultural and heritage Festival
Prebend	Type of benefice which usually consisted of income from the cathedral estates.
Prebendary	A person who held office within the cathedral.
Spectacle Dispersal	A concrete hard standing 'parking' place for aircraft which allows for better traffic flow, when taxiing around and off the perimeter track. Viewed from above they look like sets of spectacles.
Waun	Moor
Abbreviations	
CADW	Welsh Historic Monuments
EH	English Heritage
FRU	Fleet Requirement Unit
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Foods and Fisheries
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NPA	National Park
ORB	Operational Record Books
PCNPA	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
RAF	Royal Air Force
RLG	Relief Landing Ground
WAAF	Women's Auxiliary Air Force

Place name spellings follow the Ordnance Survey protocol, not the older and sometimes different Welsh variations. The spelling of St David's, throughout this document, with an apostrophe has also followed the Ordnance Survey spelling of this place.

1 SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

This study was commissioned by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA), as part of a professional work placement, to research the history of the landscape prior to the construction of the airfield, the history of the airfield and to record the physical remains of the airfield. It will also question and review the management decisions made in 1996, when the land was first purchased by the PCNPA, as how to 'restore' the site'. With better understanding of the archaeological values of this site, the findings of this study may influence future management decisions for, not only, the St David's site but also other airfield sites that fall within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

There has been plenty of research carried out into the operational life of the airfield but no research has been done on the impact of the airfield, either on the landscape, or the local community. Whilst using landscape archaeological approaches for this study it became apparent that there are three, very different, man-made landscapes that occupy/occupied the same site: pre-airfield, airfield and post-airfield. Different generations valued each landscape, for varying reasons. There was a very strong 'sense of place' and a social archaeology that was not, at first, obvious in a site that, in inclement weather, can appear unappealing and uninteresting.

This report, therefore, also briefly studies the effect of transitions between landscapes on the people who live or lived on or in the surrounding area to better understand that 'sense of place' in order to preserve the intangible values of the site. Intangible values play an important role in how people interact with their social and cultural environments and the importance of these values impact on the ways in which people react to conservation needs.

Whilst the runways survive unaltered in their original form the perimeter roads and dispersal points have been partially obscured by the restoration works. This

makes the site very difficult to interpret, especially as this is a flat landscape. The vast sense of a vast open space as an airfield was lost when high hedgebanks were planted to obscure the runways for ecological and site management reasons. As no buildings survive on the airfield itself it was not easy to follow the standard guidelines laid down in English Heritage's 'Historic Military Aviation Sites'. There is there is very little guidance on how to deal with a site such as St David's.

1.2 Methodology

Existing historical, archaeological and ecological documentation of the St David's airfield area were consulted. A comprehensive site survey of the airfield and associated sites was carried out. An interview was recorded for an article in the Pembrokeshire Coast Park News which formed the basis of a Country Focus programme for BBC Radio Wales. It was hoped that this might illicit more information about the site. As little documentary evidence existed for the pre-airfield settlements Oral History techniques were applied to try to fill in these gaps. A series of interviews were completed with individuals who had links with the area. A separate visitor survey was carried out to understand how people view and use the site today. A digital photographic survey was undertaken but a measured survey was not carried out because not enough structures are left to record in a meaningful way. The photographic survey exists as a separate document on the PCNPA MapInfo GIS database.

1.3 Outcome

The results of this report will be used by the PNCPA in any future Management Plans and information will be passed to the Heritage Environment Record held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Overview of the site and its setting

The airfield is located approximately 1 mile to the north of Solva, and three miles to the east of the small historic city St David's (*Figure 1*). The dispersed airfield sites, the technical and domestic buildings, lay to the south of the airfield, mainly along the A487, Solva to St David's road. The land purchased by the PCNPA in 1996 is shown on figure 2.

Site:	St David's Airfield
County:	Pembrokeshire
OS grid reference	SM790257
Sheet number:	Landranger 157
Total area:	93 hectares
Community Council	Solva Community Council
Status	Within PCNP; part SSSI



Figure 1 St David's Airfield Location Map

2.2 Geology and Landform

The inland scenery of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park is dominated by extensive, broadly flat, or gently undulating plateau surfaces that were formed by the action of the sea at a time when the sea level was much higher than at present. The present landscape has resulted from uplift of a Tertiary marine platform that maintains an average level of approximately 60 metres above sea level. Pre-Cambrian and Ordovician igneous intrusions form isolated hills (90-180 metres) above sea level. Thus, although the coastal sections are spectacular, inland the solid geology is largely obscured by deposits of glacial drift and peat. The sedimentary rocks exposed on the plateau like surface, together with the drift geology, have given rise to thin, stony and sandy soils which were famous until the 19th century for their fine crops of barley and other cereals (*John, 1988*).

2.3 Landscape Character

The tithe map of 1840 and the early Ordnance Survey maps of 1889 and 1908 show the farmsteads of Llechell and Treflodan surrounded by variety of different field patterns with the unenclosed 'moor' or waste (Waun) of Vachelich, Llechell and Treflodan to the north and west. To the south is the old Roman road, the original east-west route to St David's and the A487 coast road (*Figures 3-5*).

St David's airfield Historic Landscape Character contrasts sharply with the pattern of old established farms and fields which lie to the west, south and east with the unenclosed common to the north. The airfield consists of an open landscape of restored pasture. No buildings survive on the airfield but the perimeter, runways, spectacle hard standings and some hangar bases survive. The hedgebanks have been planted and constructed there since the war (<http://www.cambria.org.uk>).

St David's Airfield site pre and post airfield construction

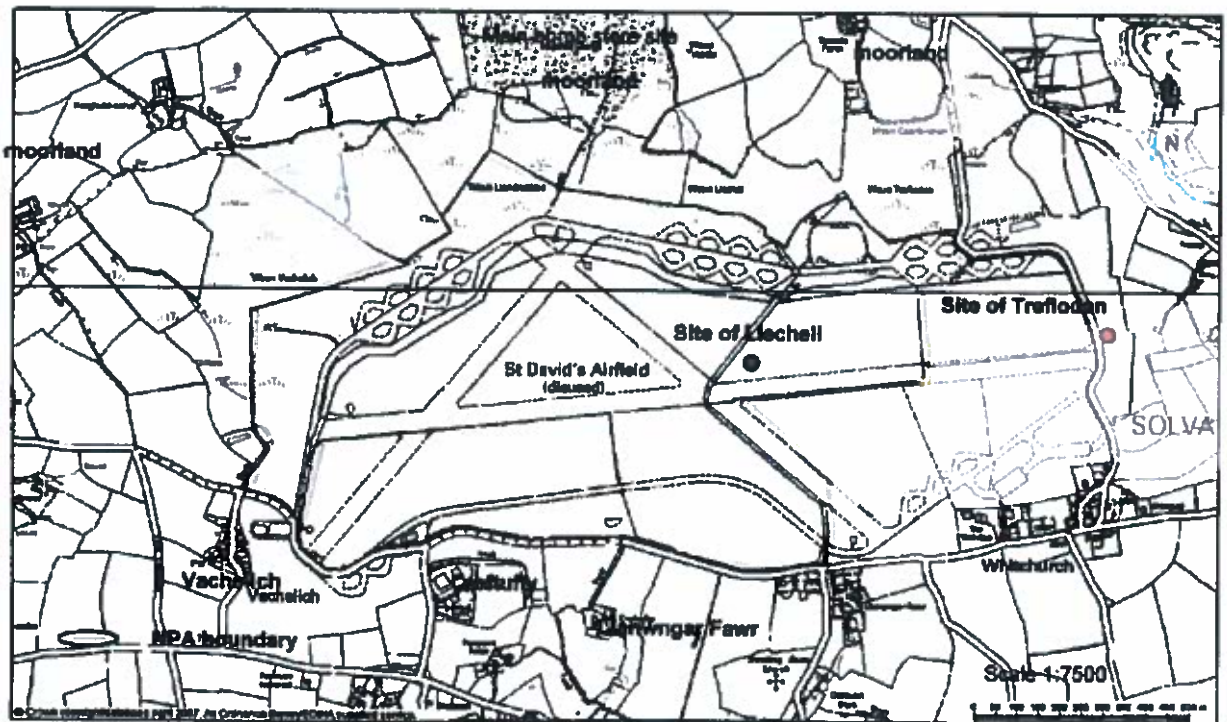


Figure 2 Modern Map of St David's Airfield (approximately 2004)

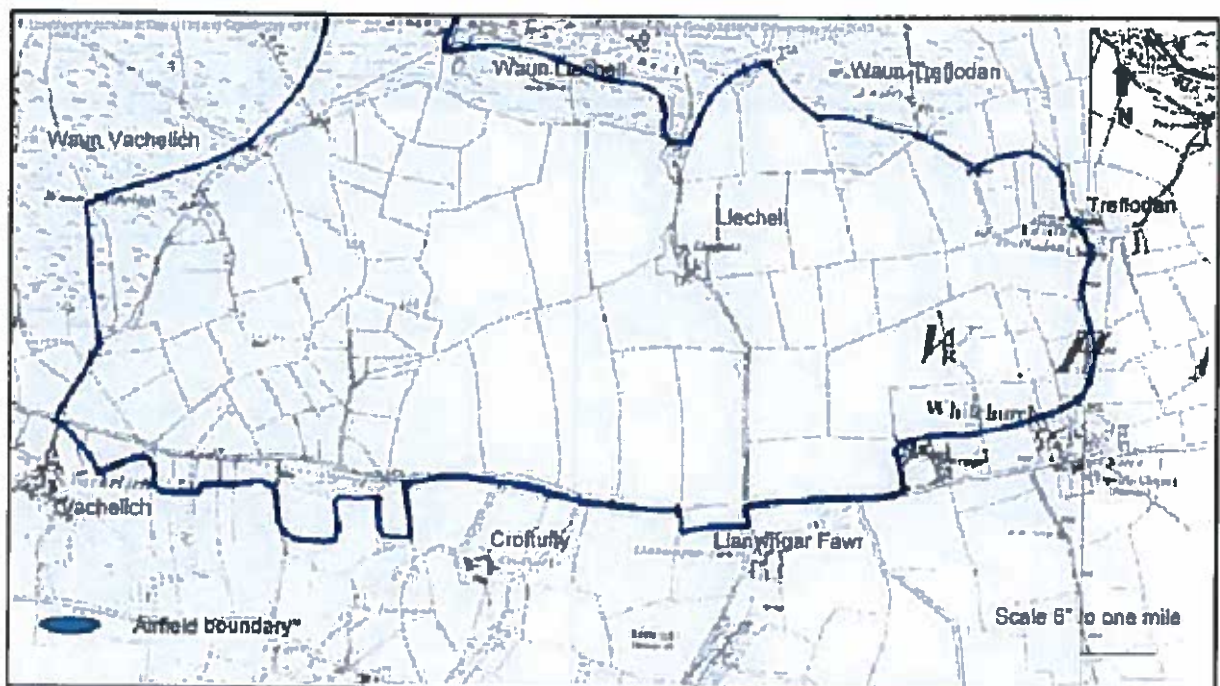


Figure 3 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1889, with airfield boundary superimposed on map

Tithe and 1908 Maps of Llechell and Treflodan

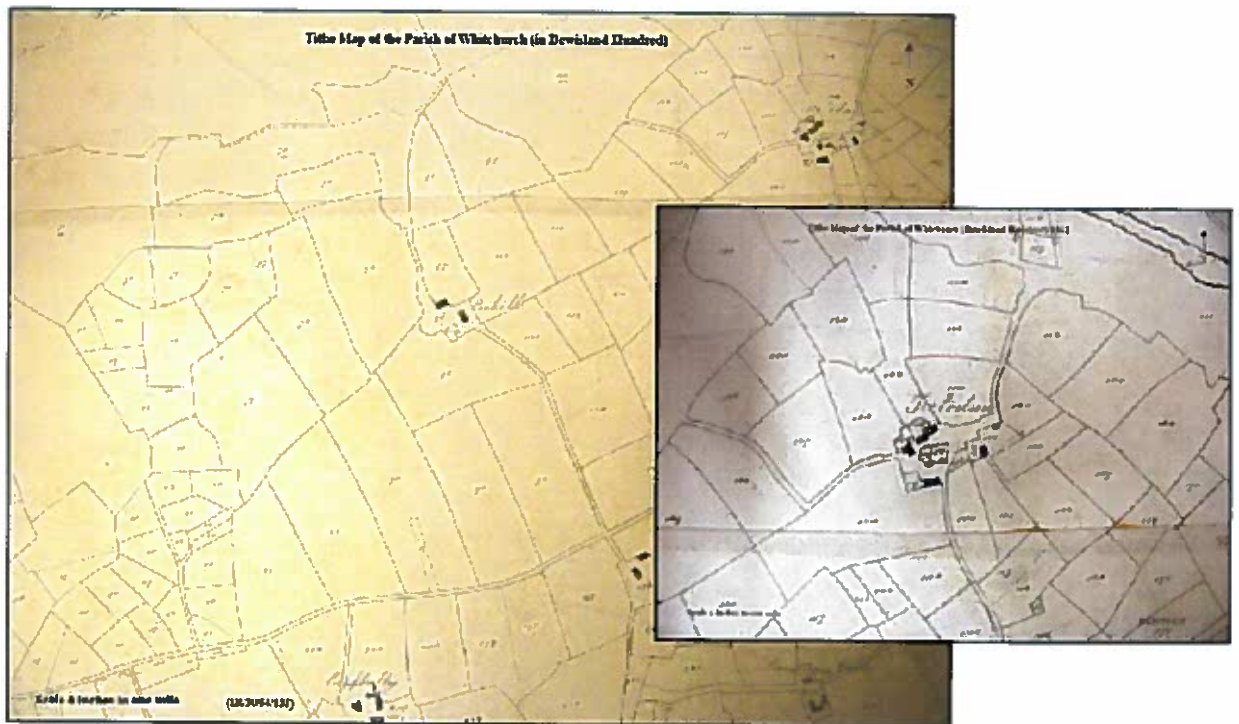


Figure 4 Tithe Map of Llechell and Treflodan

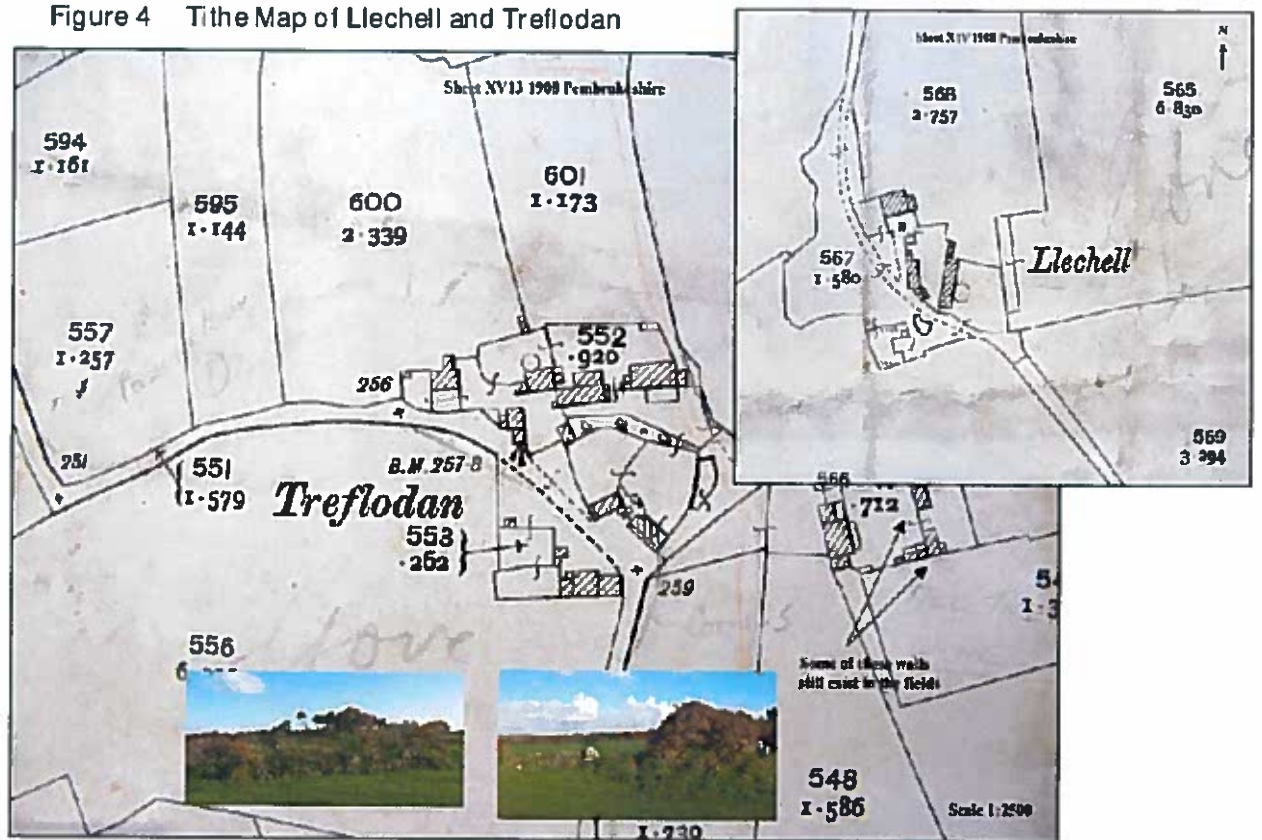


Figure 5 1908 Ordnance Survey Map

3 ST DAVID'S AIRFIELD (understanding the site)

3.1 Recorded Archaeology

The only archaeological sites recorded in the vicinity of the airfield is a record of a possible Bronze Age standing stone which is no longer there, an Iron Age find spot and the farmsteads of Llechell and Treflodan. The immediate area is rich in prehistoric and early Christian sites and probably the absence of any records reflects a lack of any previous archaeological work, rather than the potential.

3.2 Treflodan and Llechell

This was an agricultural landscape, somewhat undulating and part of an eroded plateau, lying between 70 and 75 metres, consisting mainly of two farms, Llechell (centre and west) and Treflodan (east) with an area of moorland to the west and north. As with many other areas of the landscape around St David's a pattern of dispersed settlement and different field shapes with trackways across the area can be seen. The sinuous radiating field patterns, still in use in the 1940's are suggestive of much older origins. The square fields are of more modern origin (18th -19th century), perhaps an attempt by the farmers to rationalise the pattern of land holdings.

This area lay within the medieval 'Dewisland' Hundred which was held directly by the Bishop of St David's and divided into 'vills' (division of the hundred). The area also contained part of a large, informal waste or moor 'Waun' which was divided into five moorland areas (<http://www.cambria.org.uk>). Three of the moorland areas were Waun Vachelich, Waun Llechell and Waun Treflodan. Treflodan and Llechell were later farmsteads within these divisions. It is likely that the settlement of Treflodan is of medieval origin as Treflodan is recorded as a prebend of St David's cathedral. One of the choir stalls in St David's cathedral is titled 'P' for prebend 'Treflodan'. There is reference to the manor of Treflodan

and a list various men who were Prebendaries of Treflodan from 1487 through to 1523 in the records of St David's cathedral (<http://timezone.newport.ac.uk>).

3.3 Tithe Details and 1901 Census Returns

The Tithe Map apportionment records a homestead, cottage and garden and a farmstead at Llechell with a homestead and five houses with gardens at Treflodan. The farmed lands are a mixture of arable and pasture (*IR/29/54/35*). The census returns for 1901 returns record Treflodan as Trelodan with six inhabited houses and two farms, both called Trelodan. In one farm lived the farmer owner, Daniel Davies with his wife and five children. At the second farm was a tenant farmer with his wife and four children. The other houses were inhabited by agricultural labourers and a domestic servant. At Llechell lived Thomas James, farmer, owner and employer with his wife Margaret. Some of the inhabitants spoke only Welsh.

3.4 Land Utilisation and Farm Surveys

The field patterns on the future airfield site show virtually no change from the 1841 Tithe Map and the 1889 Ordnance Survey Map through to Dudley Stamp's 1934 Land Utilisation Survey, the 1942 RAF aerial photograph of the area and the Ministry of Agriculture, Farms and Fisheries (MAFF) Farm Survey map (*Figs 3 - 8*).

The short Agricultural Returns of June 1941 and longer National Farm Surveys completed in January 1942 provide a detailed and fascinating insight into the farms which survived to exist on the edge of the airfield and those that were swallowed up by it under the War Ministry Act of compulsory purchase of farmland (*Appendix 1*). A soldier from the nearby hamlet, to the north at Caerfarchell, who went away to war in 1941 found, on his return in 1945, the landscape radically altered with the small settlement around Treflodan completely crased from the landscape (*pers.comm Thomas*).

3.5 Llechell Farm, Treflodan and Llanwngar Farm Surveys

Llechell was owned by Ernest Walters who had lived at the farm for 33 years farming 51 acres of good quality farmland and 15 acres of moor with common land and grazing rights. The farm, roads and buildings were in good order, production was good and given the top 'A' classification. However there was no electricity or running water. Llechell was situated in the centre of the airfield.

In the small settlement at Treflodan, three farm surveys were returned, of 23 acres, 60 acres and 47 acres with extra moor land and grazing rights. The land here was of poorer quality and the farms received a 'B' classification. Treflodan was situated at the east end of the east-west runway and just the remains of a few walls of the settlement can still be seen in the fields to the east of the airfield (*Figure 5*).

Llanwngar Fawr was on the edge of the airfield site and reputed to be one of the best in the county with 130 acres, 96% of which was in good condition. The farm survey concluded that:

... 'this was an energetic farmer, a Milk Retail Producer with a good herd of milking cows and produced good crops of corn hay and roots' (*MAF 32/1313/60*).

The Farm Surveys also detail stock patterns, acreage, rental and ownership details (*Appendix 1*). The pattern of land ownership on and surrounding the airfield is shown on the accompanying map which covers all but the westernmost end of the airfield (*Figure 8*).

3.6 Local Memories

With no piped water or electricity these were not sophisticated settlements and in the 1930's Don Page, who was a schoolboy at the time, can remember travelling round to the farms with the charging accumulators for the wet batteries along rough tracks rather than roads (*pers.comm Page*). Granville James, who lived as a

boy at Treflodan, can remember the buildings as typical of the area; single storey stone dwellings with slate roofs tied down with barbed wire and concreted over to stop the slates from blowing away in the high winds (*pers.comm James*). One of the houses at Treflodan was a more substantial, two storey house with a gated entrance, open yard and hayguard (open yard with hard floor) and was deemed locally to be the 'gentry house' in which lived Thomas of Treflodan (*pers.comm Vaughan, M.*) This may have been the house where the Prebendary of St David's had lived.

3.7 Previous Work

In 1993 Roger Thomas of English Heritage was commissioned to survey the 19th and 20th Military Buildings of Pembrokeshire and recorded a few buildings of the dispersed sites that had survived. He recommended that while some of these sites should be demolished, a few were worthy of further consideration. Nothing positive has been done to any of the surviving features since the report was written. Some of these features are further discussed in sections 6 and 11.

3.8 Summary

The arable land was on the mid to south side of the airfield with the poorer quality, and wetter land, mainly in pasture. This can be seen on both the 1942 aerial photograph and 1934 Land Utilisation Survey (*Figures 6 & 7*). The fields were divided by the classic Pembrokeshire hedge-bank, a sturdy wall of stone and turf often topped with a hedge which provided both a boundary marker and shelter for animals.

On the pre-airfield site there was a pattern of dispersed settlement which consisted of homesteads/smallholdings rather than large farms which remained little changed in over 100 years and possibly for much longer. It was a very quiet rural agricultural area with tracks rather than roads, no electricity or piped water. The moorland was maintained by these farmers exercising their grazing and common land rights as they had done for centuries.

Land use and settlement prior to airfield construction

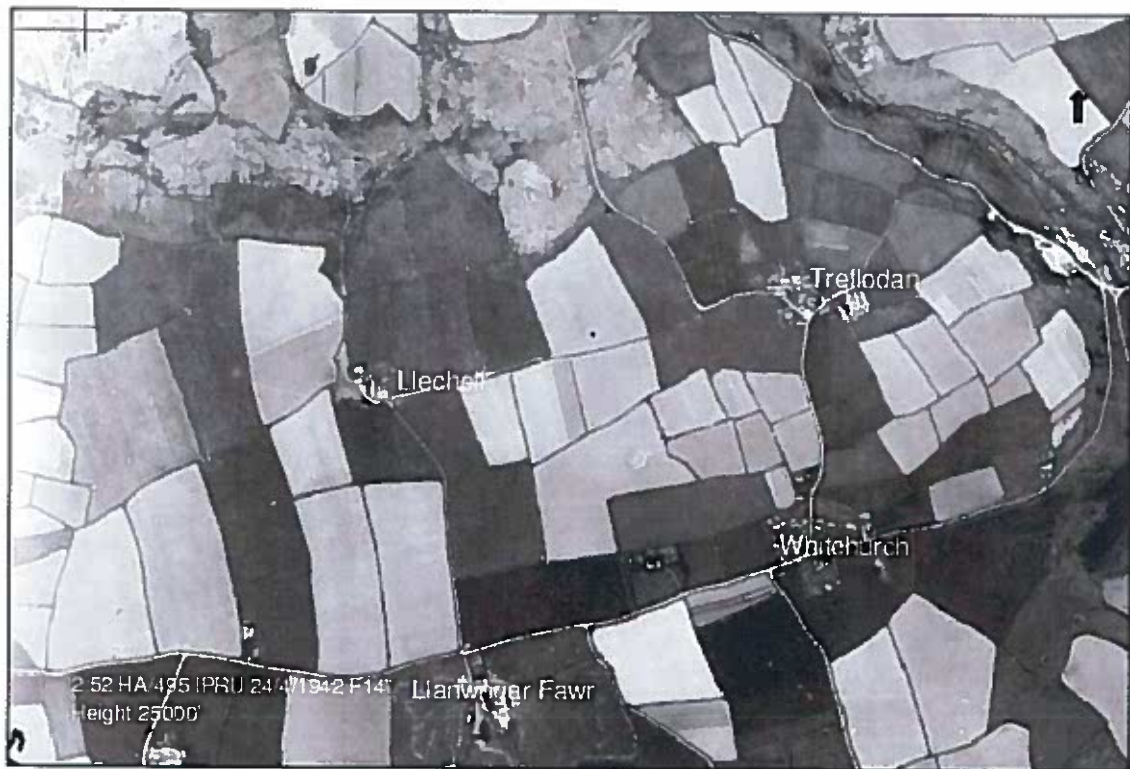


Figure 6 1942 RAF Aerial Photograph prior to airfield construction

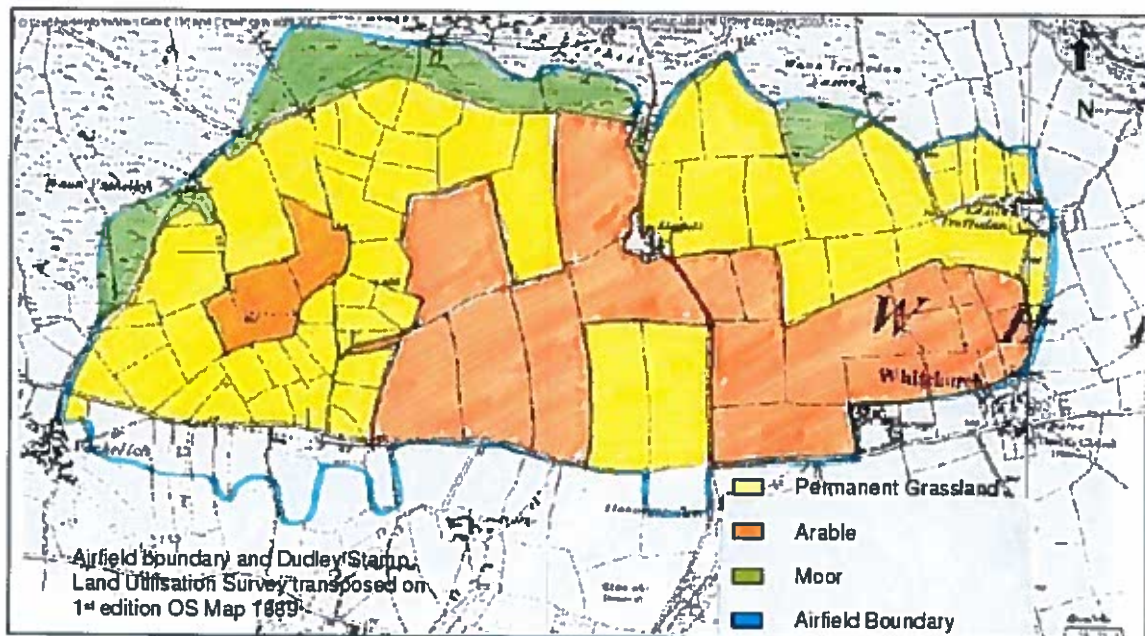


Figure 7 Land Utilisation within airfield boundary

Pattern of Farm Ownership on Airfield

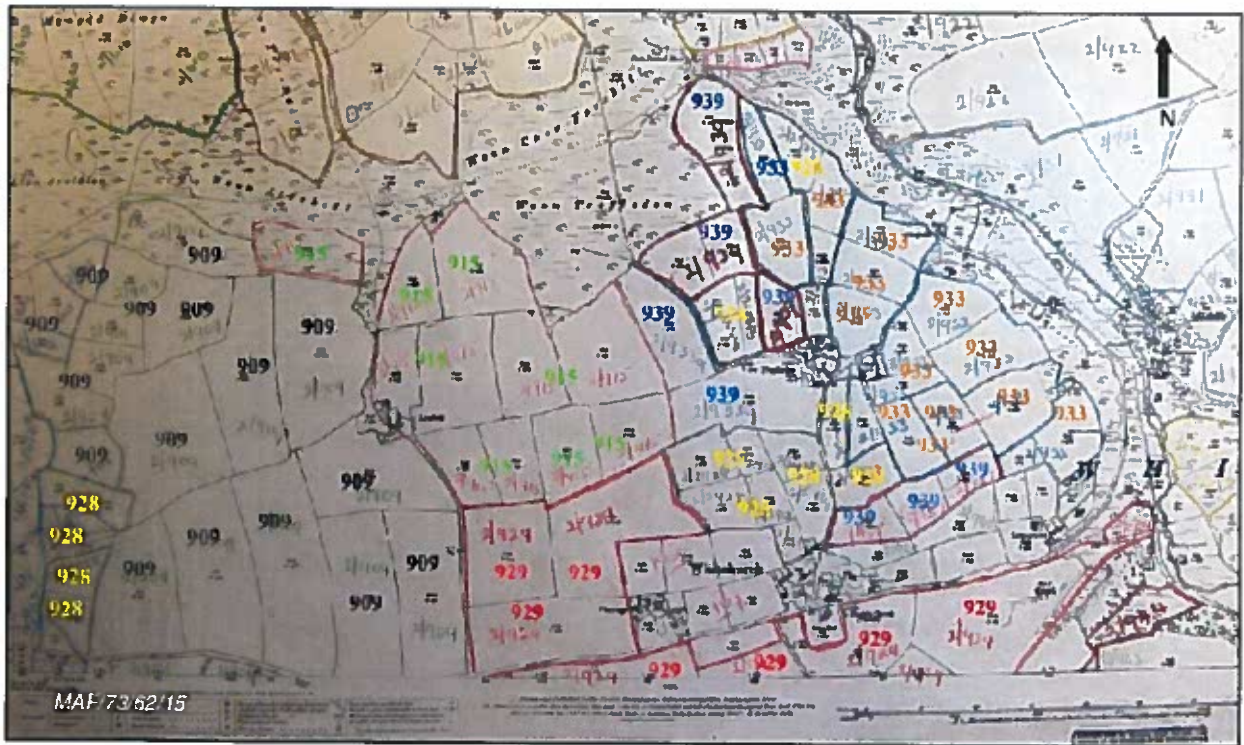


Figure 8 1943 MAFF Farm Survey Map

- None of the farms were very large and field patterns had changed little since the 1841 Tithe Survey. The extreme east and west field patterns were one of smaller fields with an almost radial field pattern around the settlement. The larger fields were found located on the central part of the plateau where the land was flatter, better drained and of better quality, a fact borne out by the farm surveys. To the north and west is the moorland.
- 909 Croftufty Farmhouse and half of farmed land south of airfield
- 915 Llechell All lands and farmhouse on airfield
- 928 Treflodan 1 Small scattered fields and farmhouse on airfield with exception of two fields
- 929 Llanwngar Farmhouse and more land south of airfield
- 933 Treflodan 2 Farmhouse and most fields on airfield, other fields to east
- 939 Treflodan 3 Farmhouse and most fields on airfield.
- When the airfield was eventually sold by the M.O.D. Llanwngar bought back their fields and some of those that had belonged to Treflodan and Llechell. The owner of Llechell did not buy back land, as he had lost his farmhouse and livelihood as had those farming at Treflodan who were mainly tenant farmers. The lands belonging to Croftufty were bought by an outsider, from Cardiff.

3.8 Landscape in Change

Work began on the construction of the airfield centred on NGR SM790255 in late 1942. The buildings at Treflodan and Llechell were demolished, the land leveled, all hedges and banks removed and roads closed. Farms or small holdings that bordered the southern perimeter of the airfield were at Llanwngar Fawr, Croftufty and Vachelich. These farms had land requisitioned for both the airfield and for the dispersed sites of the airfield.

Ernest Walters of Llechell had refused to leave and on the day of the final farm sale he was still in residence with the bulldozers outside waiting for him to leave, it had been his home and life for 33 years. He moved to a caravan on the outskirts of the airfield and took casual work on the airfield. He never returned to his land (*pers.comm Vaughan, M.*). At Vachelich a smallholder, William Reynolds, lost not only fields in the western part of the airfield, he also lost rights of access across the airfield to Waun Vachelich to exercise his common grazing rights. He and his father before him had always used their rights of common to graze their cattle over the moor. They had also dug colm pits for clay and the moor is still pitted by these water-filled depressions (*D/JF/1*).

Within nine months this sparsely populated rural landscape was to be replaced by an airfield and its dispersed sites that offered every modern convenience of a small township able to accommodate up to 2500 RAF personnel. As grazing rights could no longer be maintained on the moorland, inevitably the character of the moorland would also change. Whilst the moorland landscape may look wild and natural, it is one that has been maintained over many hundred of years by man.

Possibly the loss of the settlements of Llechell and Treflodan have a parallel in the history of enclosure when a landowner swept away settlements and emparked the site, leaving little or no traces of the former occupation. However

the footprint of this earlier landscape, and any earlier undiscovered archaeology, is sealed beneath the 20th century airfield landscape and any remains of Llechell and Treflodan survive beneath the grass adjacent to the runways.

4 COASTAL COMMAND

4.1 Introduction

‘The only thing that ever really frightened me in the war was the U-boat peril.....our lifeline, even across the broad oceans, and especially in the entrance to the island were endangered. I was always more anxious about this battle than I had been about the glorious air fight called the Battle of Britain’
(Churchill, p.531).

4.2 Battle of the Atlantic

The Battle of the Atlantic played a very significant part in the Second World War. As an island Britain needed to bring in vast quantities of food and military equipment to survive the war. One of the most serious threats to Great Britain during the Second World War were the German submarines which created havoc with the vital convoys arriving across the Atlantic. By 1940 the whole of the coastline of western mainland Europe and their ports came under German control. This gave a base for the submarines thus shortening their passage to the south-western approaches of Britain and so shipping losses increased (*HDX/945/1 Tipton*). Consequently Pembrokeshire was on the front line of the Battle of the Atlantic.

4.3 Coastal Command in Pembrokeshire

Coastal Command controlled many formations during the Second World War, some of which were responsible for different geographical sectors of the British coastline. In February 1941 No. 19 Group was activated and was made responsible for the south-west approaches. The No. 19 Group’s remit, in the Irish

Sea, ran south of a line approximately in the middle of Cardigan Bay, and in the eastern Atlantic, the boundary ran slightly north of that line. One squadron, 517, based for a short time at St. David's and thereafter at Brawdy was concerned with meteorological reconnaissance and was equipped with 18 Halifax V aircraft. Their flights, airborne for long periods, mainly to the south-west, followed various pressure levels collecting meteorological data which was so important to air operations generally and which specifically played a vital role in the last stages of invasion planning. By D Day Coastal Command were engaged in sealing off the approaches to the Channel to protect the route of the invasion fleet and its line of communication. 1944 was the year of climax building up to the Invasion of Europe and running down of surveillance operations as German resistance crumbled (*HDX/945/1 Tipton*).

4.4 Impact of the Second World War on the Pembrokeshire Landscape

Airfields have always had an enormous impact on the British landscape; many of the nucleated inter-war airfields were intended to be permanent features in the landscape. Their type and form varied according to the period in which they were built. Throughout Second World War new airfields, mainly class A type, were built with concrete runways, dispersal points and perimeters. Clutches of technical and domestic sites were built in the surrounding countryside, as dispersed sites for safety reasons, constructed from materials which were only intended to 'last for the duration'.

In order to construct each class A or similar size airfield, 600 acres had to be requisitioned, cleared and leveled. 130,000 tons of hardcore, cement and macadam were needed to lay 40,000 square yards of runways, hardstandings, roads and pathways. In addition about 50 miles of pipes and conduits went into the self-contained small township that would rise out of the British countryside.

Once selected a huge amount of work went into preparing the site; buildings were leveled and there was no time for salvage or removal of quality building stone. Hedges, trees and roots were removed ditches and hollows were filled in. Sites had to be leveled so that no gradient was greater than 1 in 60 (*Innes, 1995*).

The deployment of these airfields reflected key strategic military considerations in their siting. Pembrokeshire's geographical location, at the south-western extremity of Wales was ideally situated for the building of strategic airfields, needed for Coastal Command, during the latter part of Second World War. One of the most important attributes of this landscape, from a military strategist's point of view, was its plateau-like character. The flattened erosion surface, particularly extensive below an altitude of 120 metres, combined with the county's relative freedom from fog made it an ideal location (*Evans and John, 1973*). In the period of time before and during the Second World War twelve airfields were constructed, seven of which on some of the finest coastal locations in what is now the Pembrokeshire Coastal National Park (*Fig 9*).

Some of the other airfields in the Coastal Command No. 19 Group were Talbenny and Dale which opened in 1942, followed by St David's in August 1943 and Brawdy in early 1944.



Figure 9 Pembrokeshire Second World War Airfields

5 HISTORY OF ST DAVID'S AIRFIELD

5.1 Airfield Construction-local memories

The airfield boundaries generally coincided or respected road old field boundaries and deliberately avoided the small settlement at Whitchurch which included the church and vicarage. This had the effect of giving the airfield an irregular boundary. A great deal of work went into leveling this site and in some places, at the edge of the moor to the north; there is a difference of 1.5 metres between the moorland and the airfield. A good deal of material was therefore required to level the site.

Don Page and Ronald Griffiths who were schoolboys at the time the airfield was constructed can remember the yellow trucks of Wimpey, who had the contract to

build the airfield, passing their school at Croesgoch, halfway between the quarry and the airfield, every twenty minutes. The trucks were collecting aggregate from a quarry at Pantyphilip, Sceddau on the road to Fishguard and Don Page said that the sand came from a quarry near Solva.

The aggregate, when it did reach the airfield, was shovelled off by hand, as the trucks were not tipper ones. The cement came in bags and was mixed in a vast concrete mixer. When the bags were empty they were stored in the now deserted hamlet of Treflodan. These were eventually set fire to, thus helping to demolish the buildings. The sand and aggregate was laid over a metre thick on the runways (*pers.comm Page*). Both men commented that the machines brought in to construct the airfield were like no others previously seen before in that part of Pembrokeshire.

5.2 Airfield Construction and Layout

Most airfields were built with three runways, one of which would favour the prevailing wind, and the three runways would not have a common intersection. The runways were connected by a perimeter taxi track which had various shapes and sizes of aircraft dispersals, loop, spectacle, D-ring or frying pan. A number of buildings had blast earth protection walls, such as bomb stores and shelters. During the war it was decided that a policy of dispersal would be adopted, thus spreading individual sites over a larger area (*Innes, 1995*).

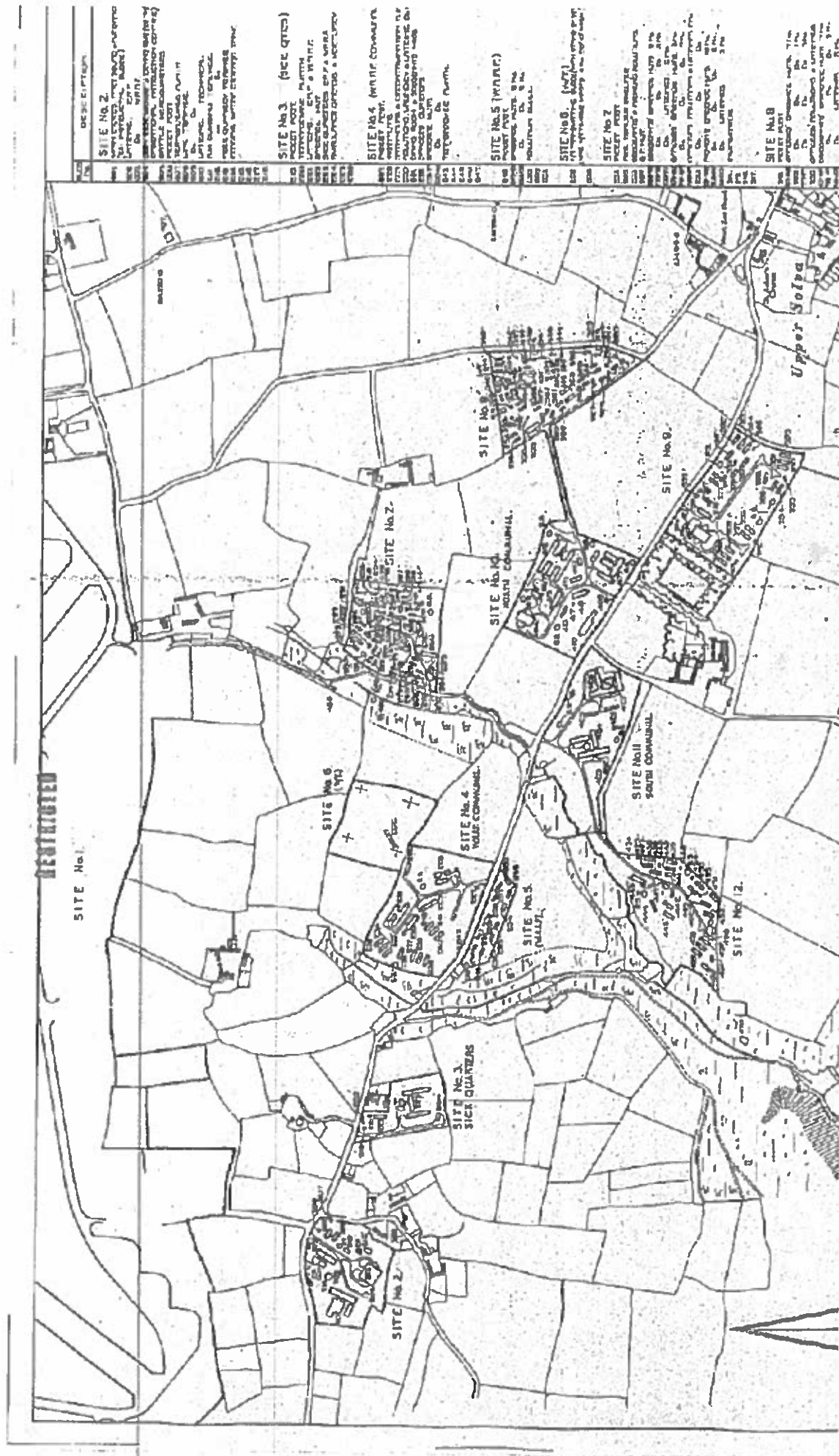
The St David's site, built comparatively late into the war, and only ever intended to be a temporary airfield, was developed with the construction of three runways. The main runway orientated east/west, 2000 yards long, the second orientated north-west-south-east, 1400 yards long and the third north-east-south-west, 1,200 yards long. The runways were built in concrete and wood chip sections. Three T. 2 hangars were built, two on the main technical site and a third on a perimeter track loop on the south-east side.

The perimeter track was provided with thirty spectacle type dispersals, mainly on the northern perimeter track which conforms to the Class A layout for airfields (Delve, 2007). A perimeter track extension led off on the northern edge, over wet moorland between Waun Llandruidon and Waun Llechell, to the bomb dump. A smaller incendiary store was built out over the moor between Waun Llechell and Waun Treflodan. The remnants of the blast earth protection walls are still visible in some places and the siting of these volatile sites made the most of the natural topography with its ability to absorb any substantial blasts. This area was also uninhabited (Figure 10). All the domestic and some technical sites were built away from the airfield, as dispersed sites, to the south of the airfield (Figure 11). The metamorphosis of peaceful agricultural land into what was virtually a small town was accomplished in a matter of months.

5.3 Operational Station

Although the station officially opened on the 26th August 1943 it was not fit for operations until the November of that year with the arrival of Squadron 517. The airfield was late in completion because of the lack of materials, labour and heavy plant. This was because several airfields were being developed simultaneously in close proximity, such as at Brawdy, two miles to the east. Late in 1943 two more squadrons arrived at St David's, 58 and 502. These squadrons were engaged in long range patrols in the Atlantic, looking out for submarines in the Bay of Biscay and as far south as the Spanish coast (Jones, 2007).





NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	SITE No. 1
2	SITE No. 2
3	SITE No. 3
4	SITE No. 4
5	SITE No. 5
6	SITE No. 6
7	SITE No. 7
8	SITE No. 8
9	SITE No. 9
10	SITE No. 10
11	SITE No. 11
12	SITE No. 12
13	SITE No. 13
14	SITE No. 14
15	SITE No. 15
16	SITE No. 16
17	SITE No. 17
18	SITE No. 18
19	SITE No. 19
20	SITE No. 20
21	SITE No. 21
22	SITE No. 22
23	SITE No. 23
24	SITE No. 24
25	SITE No. 25
26	SITE No. 26
27	SITE No. 27
28	SITE No. 28
29	SITE No. 29
30	SITE No. 30
31	SITE No. 31
32	SITE No. 32
33	SITE No. 33
34	SITE No. 34
35	SITE No. 35
36	SITE No. 36
37	SITE No. 37
38	SITE No. 38
39	SITE No. 39
40	SITE No. 40
41	SITE No. 41
42	SITE No. 42
43	SITE No. 43
44	SITE No. 44
45	SITE No. 45
46	SITE No. 46
47	SITE No. 47
48	SITE No. 48
49	SITE No. 49
50	SITE No. 50
51	SITE No. 51
52	SITE No. 52
53	SITE No. 53
54	SITE No. 54
55	SITE No. 55
56	SITE No. 56
57	SITE No. 57
58	SITE No. 58
59	SITE No. 59
60	SITE No. 60
61	SITE No. 61
62	SITE No. 62
63	SITE No. 63
64	SITE No. 64
65	SITE No. 65
66	SITE No. 66
67	SITE No. 67
68	SITE No. 68
69	SITE No. 69
70	SITE No. 70
71	SITE No. 71
72	SITE No. 72
73	SITE No. 73
74	SITE No. 74
75	SITE No. 75
76	SITE No. 76
77	SITE No. 77
78	SITE No. 78
79	SITE No. 79
80	SITE No. 80
81	SITE No. 81
82	SITE No. 82
83	SITE No. 83
84	SITE No. 84
85	SITE No. 85
86	SITE No. 86
87	SITE No. 87
88	SITE No. 88
89	SITE No. 89
90	SITE No. 90
91	SITE No. 91
92	SITE No. 92
93	SITE No. 93
94	SITE No. 94
95	SITE No. 95
96	SITE No. 96
97	SITE No. 97
98	SITE No. 98
99	SITE No. 99
100	SITE No. 100

5.4 St David's reconstructed

The crash of a Halifax bomber into the control tower in July 1944 provides the one photographic record found of the airfield in war time. However, photographs from other Pembrokeshire airfields provide an idea of what buildings would have been on site (*Figures 12-17*).

The earliest aerial photograph of St David's airfield dates to the late 1950's. This shows the control tower, T2 type hangar and other technical buildings. These buildings are surrounded by a concrete and grass, wide open, tree and hedge less, severe and stark landscape (*Figure 18*).

Included in both the St David's Record Site Plan for the Airfield and the Dispersed Sites is a detailed key that records every building, construction materials and a drawing number which referred to standard buildings used for airfields everywhere. Table 1 gives a breakdown of the key to the dispersed sites giving an idea of both the diversity of the facilities and the temporary nature of the materials from which these buildings were constructed. On the airfield itself the buildings were mainly of temporary brick or Nissen huts with a few corrugated iron buildings.

Reconstructing St David's Airfield



Figure 12 Pilots at 'readiness' outside Nissen Huts



Figure 13 Type T2 Hangar behind Control Tower



Figure 14 Halifax HX 177 Crash July 1944



Figure 15 Maycrete Barracks Hut



Figure 16 Type 'T2' Hangar

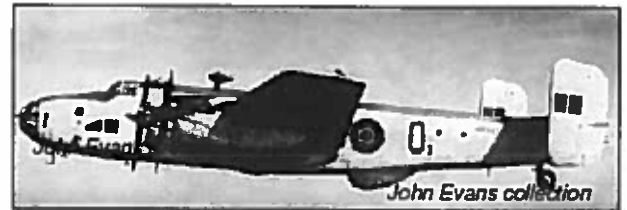


Figure 17 Halifax HR744 St Davids



Figure 18 Late 1950's T2 Hangar and Control Tower

St David's Dispersed Sites					
Site 2	Type	Site 3 (Sick Quarters)	Type		
Main Stores	N.	Picket Post	T.B.		
Latrines	T.B.	Transformer Plinth			
Operational Instructional Centre	N.	Latrines	T.B.		
Crew Rest Locker/Drying Room	N.	Barrack Huts	S.		
Bombing Teacher	T.B.	Sick Quarters	N.		
Free Gunnery Trainer	ST.	Ambulance Garage	N.		
Spare Water Storage Tank	ST.	Mortuary	N.		
Battle Headquarters	P.B.				
Site 4 (WAAF)	Type	Site 5 (WAAF)	Type		
Picket Post	T.B.	Picket Post	T.B.		
Institute	N.	Barrack huts (5)	N.		
Bath House	T.B.	Barrack huts (5)	N.		
Decontamination Block	T.B.	Ablution Block	T.B.		
Ablutions	T.B.				
Dining Room	N.				
Sergeants Mess	N.				
Officers Quarters	N.				
Site 6	Type	Site 7	Type	Site 8	Type
Telegraph Transmitting Block	T.B.	Picket Post	T.B.	Picket Post	T.B.
4 masts and transformer		Sergeants Barrack Huts (5)	N.	Officers Barrack Huts (7)	N.
		Sergeants Barrack Huts (3)	N.	Officers Barrack Huts (3)	N.
		Officers Barrack Huts (3)	N.	Officers Barrack Huts (1)	N.
		Officers Barrack Huts (7)	N.	Officers Ablutions/Latrines	T.B.
		Firemens Barrack Huts (18)	N.	Firemens Barrack Huts (19)	N.
		Officers Ablutions	N.	Firemens Barrack Huts (3)	S.
		Sergeants/Fire Ablutions	T.B.	Firemens Ablutions/Latrines	T.B.
		GP Hut	T.B.		
		Fire Tender Shelter	N.		
		Incinerator			
		Sergeant Latrines	T.B.		
		Officers Latrines	T.B.		
Site 9	Type	Site 10 (North Communal)	Type	Site 11 (South Communal)	Type
Picket Post	T.B.	Picket Post	T.B.	Picket Post	T.B.
Firemens Barrack Huts (10)	T.B.	Institute	N.	Officers Mess	N.
Latrines	S.	Tailor, Barber, Shoemaker	T.B.	Officers Showers	T.B.
Sergeants/Firemens Ablutions	T.B.	Ration Store	T.B.	Squash Court	T.B.
Officer Barrack Huts (3)	S.	Firemens Dining Room	T.B.	C.O. Quarters	T.B.
Officer Barrack Huts (1)	S.	Stand-by Sgt House	T.B.		
Officer Barrack Huts (2)	S.	Fuel Compound		Site 12	Type
Ablutions and Latrines	T.B.	Firemens Showers	T.B.	Picket Post	T.B.
Sergeants Barrack Huts (2)	T.B.	Firemens Latrines	T.B.	Transformer Plinth	
Sergeants Barrack Huts (3)	T.B.	Transformer Plinth		Firemens Barrack Huts	S.
Sergeants Latrines (2)	T.B.	Grocery and Local Produce	N.	Firemens Ablutions	T.B.
Fuel Compound		Store	S.	Sergeants Barrack Huts	S.
		Gymnasium, Cinema	S.	Sergeants Ablutions	S.
		Church	S.	Officers Barrack Huts	S.
				Officers Ablutions	T.B.
Type = Construction Materials					
Temporary Brick	T.B.				
Temporary Concrete	T.C.	The construction materials demonstrate the temporary nature of this small town which was built on standard guidelines to house approximately 2500 people at full strength. The only permanent brick building was the Battle Headquarters. It was an entirely self-sufficient unit, better equipped than the nearby villages and small town of St David's. It was only used, to it's full capacity, for a short space of time.			
Permanent Brick	P.B.				
Permanent Concrete	P.C.				
Steel	ST.				
Timber Building	T.				
Corrugated Iron Hutting	C.				
Asbestos Hutting	A.				
Nissen Hut	N.				
Seco Hutting	S.				

RAF Museum Hendon 4719/45

Table 1 Dispersed Sites Construction Materials and Type

5.5 August 1943 to September 1944

Operations Record Books (*ORBS or RAF forms 540*) were compiled, by all units, to record the day to day events on the site. These provide the human insight into what was essentially a dynamic community that lasted for a very short time. The following information is taken from the St David's ORB.

It was not until October 1943 that the Living Site, Officer's and Sergeant's Mess and Showers, Airmen's Dining Room, Ration Stores, Bookmakers, Tailors and Hairdressers were finished. It was noted that progress made by the contractors was painfully and disappointingly slow. In December there were negotiations with the Welsh Bus Company to provide late buses from Haverfordwest to the camp so personnel returning from leave could get to the camp. It was late November when an advance party from 517 Squadron finally arrived and mid-December before the aircraft of 58 and 502 Squadron reached St David's.

Flying operations commenced, but throughout February 1944 many operations were cancelled due to bad weather. Fatalities were recorded and also frustration was voiced about the problems of the strong cross-winds at St David's which necessitated using Brawdy's runways as an alternative to St David's. The runways at Brawdy were not only longer but better aligned into the strong prevailing Pembrokeshire winds, 58 and 502 Squadrons part filled up with fuel and bombs at St David's, then flew a few miles east to Brawdy to top up with fuel and continue from there on their mission. The fatalities were a mixture of aircraft not returning from operational duties and those which crashed during take off or landing.

In March 1944 the station cinema opened along with a church army canteen in Solva, the first in Pembrokeshire. A dentist arrived but had no equipment and the station was plagued throughout its duration with a contaminated water supply. An enigmatic entry on 31st May 1944 mentioned 'gearing up for the forthcoming

operations' and on the 30th June 1944 the following entry by the Group Captain Commanding RAF St David's was recorded:

'June has been a month of anticipation of the invasion of France, organising this station to play its part in this event, and now, the event has taken place, the organisations has proved satisfactory and the variations in routine, misappropriations of the buildings, has proved its value' (*AIR 28/725*).

At the end of August it is recorded that Italian co-operators (ex prisoners of war) were employed on general camp improvement. Odd corners and unfinished pieces of wasteland were graded, gardens laid out and bad road corners cut back and filled in with hard core, an attempt, even in war-time to improve the visual aspects of the landscape around them. At the same time the Group Captain, E C Kidd, somewhat sadly records:

'With the departure of 58 Squadron and everything pointing to the imminent departure of 502 Squadron, it is sad to record that St David's was completed and working well just in time for the invasion of Europe, and it had an operational life of barely three months' (*AIR 28/725*).

5.6 Fatalities

During the short period between January 1944 and June 1944 approximately 33 RAF airmen lost their lives on active service and six more until the station closed in November 1945. A comprehensive list of accidents and those airmen who lost their life whilst on active service at St David's is not included within this report but it is important to note that there has been only one memorial erected. This is a plaque at Emlych Farm, some four miles north-west to commemorate a fatal accident in July 1945. A Liberator, on training duties crashed into the farmyard with the loss of all 4 aircrew.

5.7 End of Active Service

Once the Allies had cleared the coast of France and the Biscay ports were cut off, No. 19 Group had fulfilled its task. The Squadrons left in September and St David's had been open for less than a year. Although Brawdy had been built as a satellite to St David's the HQ was moved to Brawdy in November 1944. Geomorphology had partially dictated the lay out of the runways at both airfields and the runway at Brawdy proved to be more suitable, even during the war.

St David's was used for training purposes during 1945 and in January 1946 the airfield was handed over to the Royal Navy to act as a Relief Landing Ground (RLG) for Brawdy. From September 1947 to late 1950 the station lay vacant and the buildings, only ever intended to be temporary, began to deteriorate quickly. In 1950 it was brought into use for the Airworks Fleet Requirements Unit (FRU). When the FRU left in 1961 the RAF returned to the site, as they did at Brawdy, and the main runway was used, once again, as an RLG. The few remaining buildings were demolished and the hangars transferred to Brawdy (*Delve, 2007*).

5.8 Local Memories

There are still some people who have memories of the impact the airfield and its inhabitants made in the landscape. The farm at Llanwngar Fawr, in spite of having lost land to the war cause flourished. It did a good trade in supplying eggs, chickens and milk to the airfield. They also had a couple of fierce Alsatians in the yard to discourage anyone helping themselves. The grass surrounding the runways was mown regularly and sold by a grass drying plant on site. Immediately after the war the MoD. leased the grassland between the runways to Llanwngar Fawr for silage on an eleven month agricultural rental (*pers.comm Vaughan, M.*).

Des Page who was a boy at the time can remember being taken in the back of a truck to the RAF cinema, a huge treat at the time. He can also remember the German prisoners of war who worked on the land and who carved toys made out of scraps of wood and leather to make toys with moving parts for some of the local children. All the men who helped with stories for this project can remember the excitement of watching the planes land and take off. There is a genuine fond memory of the airfield from those locals still alive. All these memories will very soon be forgotten, unless recorded, as these people are now into their late seventies.

6 AFTER THE WAR

6.1 Early Days

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park was designated a National Park in 1952. A series of correspondence early in 1951 (*COU1/639*), from the newly formed Ministry of Local Government and Planning to the National Parks Commission, regretted the fact that St David's Airfield, which had been given back to long term agriculture, was required by the Admiralty for long term flying purposes in the 'National Emergency,' Suez crisis. This did not sit well with the ethos of a soon to be National Park. The accompanying map (*Figure 19*) illustrates just how derelict the dispersed site had become in only five years. A local contractor had been allowed to 'remove such parts as he wished to remove, the residue left as an eyesore, clearly visible from the road. The Ministry promised to 'ensure such buildings, not immediately necessary, which disfigure the landscape, are removed as soon as possible'.

It is interesting to note, that in these early days of planning, *site 9* was used by the local rural district council to provide local, low cost housing, on the same footprint. A requirement for the planning permission was that the houses be built using Welsh slate for the roofs, colour wash on the walls and provide a screening

belt of trees. *Site 8* was to be used for a permanent housing for staff stationed at Brawdy. *Site 7* was eventually bought back by the former owner and turned into a static caravan site, a recurring pattern in coastal areas of Wales.

6.2 Future of Airfield and Dispersed Sites

A letter dated the 20th October 1972 to Pembrokeshire County Council from the Ministry of Defence stated that St David's airfield was likely to become surplus to requirements in the near future. If no other government department required the site it would be firstly offered to the previous owners and thereafter to the Local Authority (*PCC/HT/3/81*).

Whilst the Local Authority had attempted to remove many of the traces of the dispersed sites the bases of some remain today. The platforms of site 12, barrack huts, and substantial remains of the blast shelter are visible from the footpath leading down to the beach near Nine Wells. Some standing remains of Site 5, the WAAF, survive in poor condition are visible from site 12. At Llanwngar Fawr farm, in the corner of the garden survives a Picket Post (Guard House) and in the farm yard three Maycrete buildings are still used for storage. The former Transmitting Shed, privately owned as a workshop, survives in good condition. It is built of brick with an asbestos roof with some of the original paint, cream, green and black paint on the interior walls (*Figures 20-26*).

Two sets of aerial photographs, one taken in 1950 show the numerous airfield buildings still intact; by 1970 they have all gone, save for their bases. The airfield landscape is in stark contrast to the surrounding countryside (*Figures 27-31*).

In 1973 Brian John and John Evans wrote in *Pembroke Landscape* that most traces of the airfields had been removed but ruined military buildings still mar the landscape of the National Park. In spite of a small dedicated group of enthusiasts, no one seemed to be willing to undertake the removal of these military eyesores.

State of Dispersed Sites in 1951 and 2008

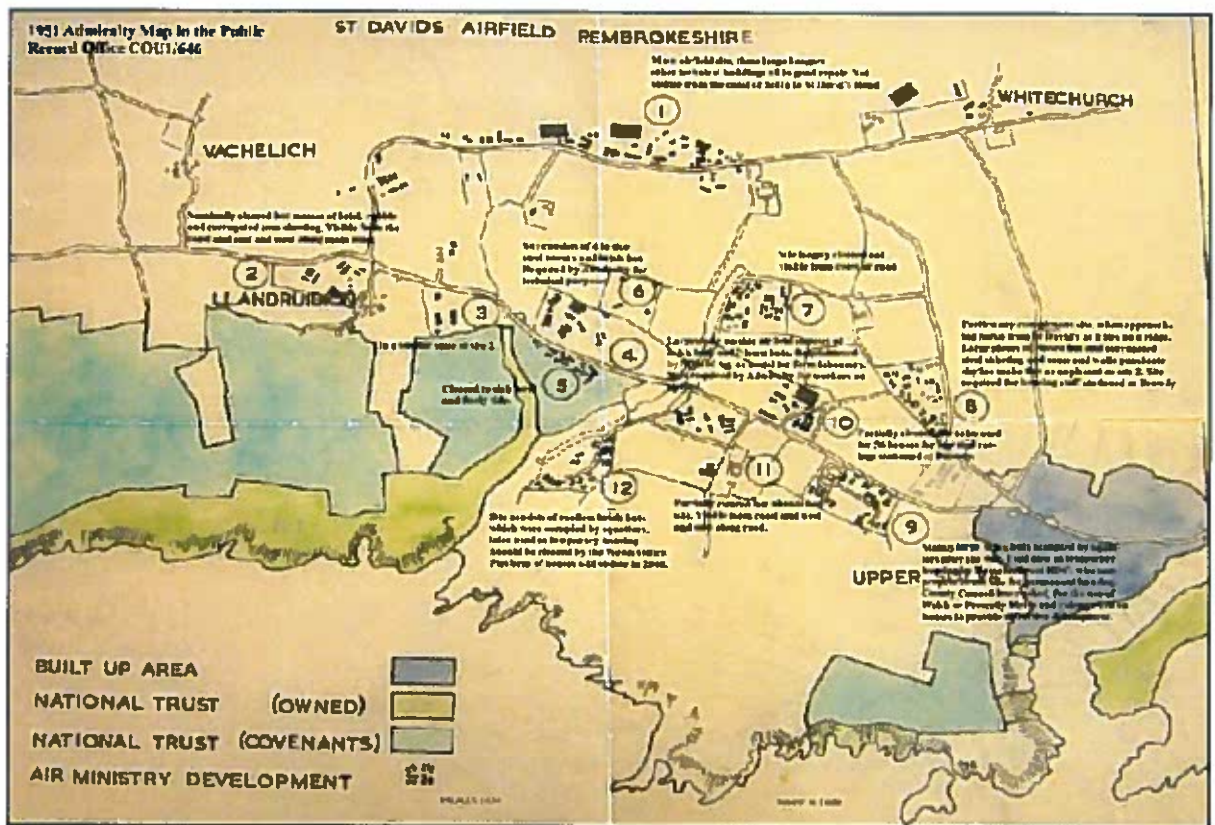


Figure 19 Dispersed Sites in 1951

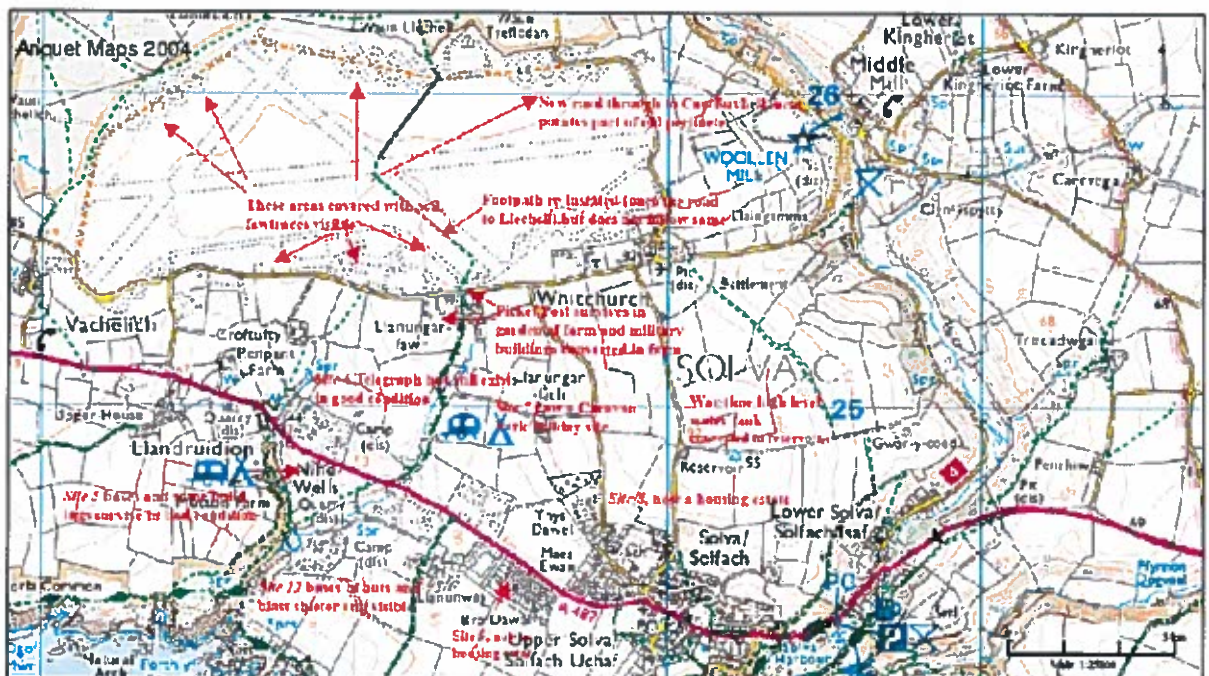


Figure 20 Dispersed Sites in 2008

(map is not surveyed up to date and shows more structures/bases than are currently on ground today)

Dispersed Sites Today



Figure 21 Blast Shelter Site 12 (SM 78842451)
(Recommended for conservation in 1993)

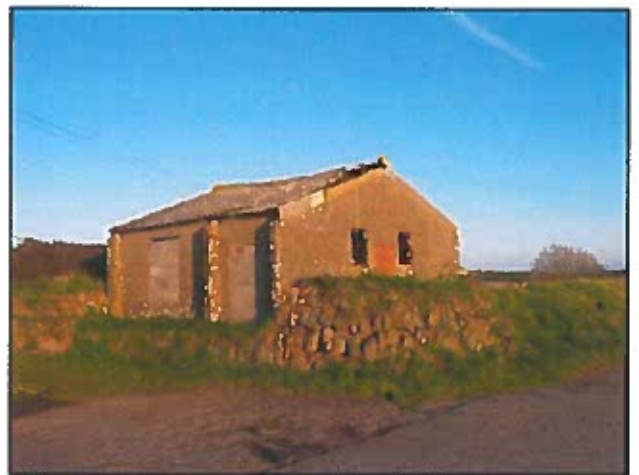


Figure 24 Picket Post (SM79252534)



Figure 22 Barracks Bases Site 5 (SM 78802481)



Figure 25 Farm Building (SM79252564)

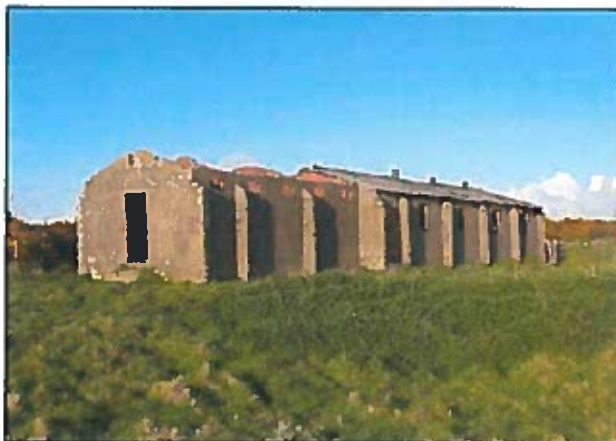


Figure 23 WAAF Site 5 (SM78802461)
(Recommended for demolition in 1993)



Figure 26 Transmitting Shed Site 6 (SM78572511)

Aerial Photographs of St David's Airfield in the 1950's and 1972



Figure 27 Late 1950's airfield



Figure 29 July 1950

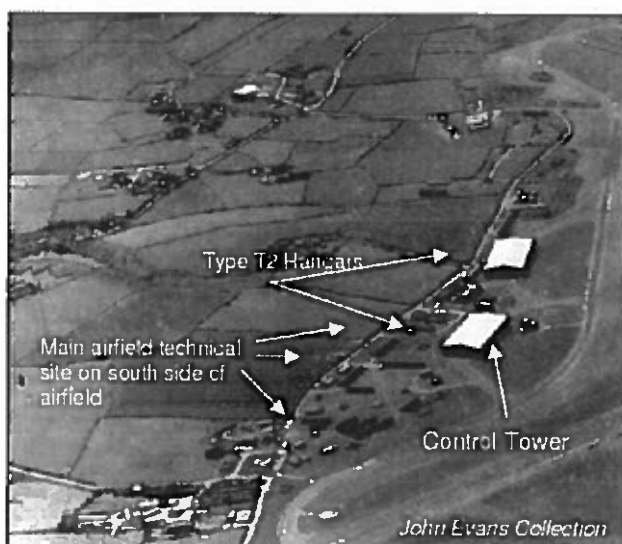


Figure 28 Late 1950's main airfield site

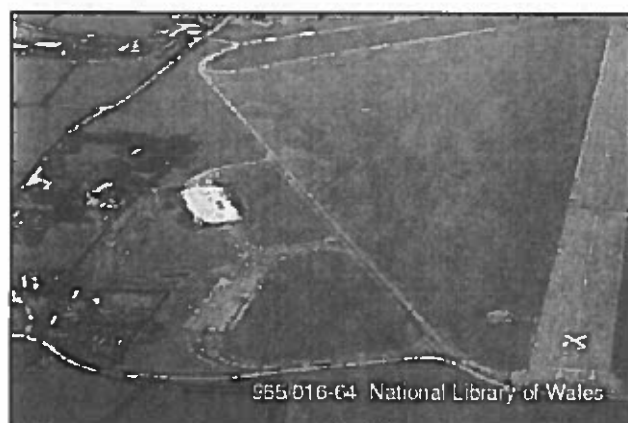


Figure 30 July 1972

The 1950's photographs show the airfield buildings still intact and some of the dispersed sites still in visible in the landscape

By 1970 the runways are still well maintained but the buildings have been demolished, leaving only the bases. The open nature of the airfield contrasts with the irregular field patterns and hedges of the agricultural land.



Figure 31 July 1972

7 FROM BOMBERS TO SKYLARKS

7.1 Phase 1 of National Parks Management Plan

In 1996 the PCNPA purchased, from the MoD, approximately 92.3 hectares of the former airfield funded by the Welsh Development Agency at a cost of £164,500.00. About 47 hectares went back into private ownership. At this time the site consisted of 3 main runways, perimeter roads, spectacle dispersal points, the derelict remains of three hangars, associated workshops and the control tower (foundations mainly). Forty hectares were in improved permanent pasture and a narrow strip of mature heath. A few footings of airfield technical sites and bomb stores survived on the moorland in the northern part of the airfield.

At the time of purchase the PCNPA felt that:

‘The runways are the most visual intrusion into the landscape. Their material form and scale of geometry are completely alien to the Peninsula scene’.

Until 1996 the main runways had been maintained by the MoD for emergency use. Since 1996 the small expansion gaps between the poured mass concrete panels, of which the runways were constructed, surface faults and cracks within the panels have been colonised by a range of plant life and the invertebrate colonies which they support. The runway surfaces provide, warm dry roosting and resting conditions for a variety of birds, reptiles and small mammals. The airfield has become an important skylark breeding habitat which has coined the phrase ‘from Bombers to Skylarks’ (*Sanctuary, MoD Estates*).

Bases and hard standings on the south side of the airfield were removed and rubble buried in situ, approximately 10,500 cubic metres of concrete were removed at this phase. Excess sub-soil was used to construct new hedges and

boundaries along the southern road boundary. A new north-south footpath was constructed between high parallel banks, concealing any view of the runways. This was a re-instatement of the old footpath that led to Llechell and out across to the moor going north. However, it did not follow exactly the line of the old the old route as it was constructed primarily for visitor access across the site (*Figure 32*).

7.2 Phase 11-Habitat Recreation

A pioneering environmental transplant scheme to recreate wet lowland heath was carried out as part of a long-term experiment by the PCNPA to 'restore the former airfield to its natural state'. This was part of the project to recreate the lost heathland landscape of the area. The scheme was in line with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and attracted funding from various sources.

On the northern perimeter of the airfield two areas were selected for a heathland restoration project, spoil (sand, cobble, stones etc.) were removed and graded down to the original level of the moorland. The spoil was spread thinly over the dispersal points and perimeter and was used to construct new banks which delineate the bridleway and footpath routes around the northern perimeter of the airfield in an east-west direction. To create a multi-user visitor route which comprised of a 2 meter hard standing and a 3 meter wide grassed area, the perimeter track and dispersal points were reduced in width. The high bank was situated to the south of the path and purposefully obscures any view of the runways. Even without the addition of soil to the concrete surfaces, a surprising amount of plant-life has colonised the runway surfaces and continues to expand (*Figures 33-35*).

On the southern perimeter, on private land, the bases of the hangars and the full width of the perimeter track and dispersals can be clearly seen as they have not been altered, so the original scale of construction can be appreciated (*Figure 39*).

The new visitor routes, hedges and reduced width perimeter road and dispersal points are depicted on the accompanying map (*Figure 38*). As this flat site is difficult to visually understand on the ground the best way to appreciate the site is from the aerial photograph taken in 2004 (*Figure 39*). In 2008, four years after the photograph was taken, the increase in vegetation is significant, with many of the features becoming buried archaeology. The agricultural land surrounding the runways was planted in semi-natural grassland and is farmed organically and let for grazing which has resulted in fences and gates across and along the runway.

This information on the restoration of the airfield site was taken from PCNPA ecological working file within the management plan in which there was no mention made about the integrity or values of the aviation archaeology. In 1996 it was thought that this site had little to offer in archaeological terms. This derelict site must have appeared, visually, to be a fairly desolate landscape within the National Park which needed changing.

7.3 The Gorsedd Stones

In 2002 the PCNPA gave permission for St David's Airfield to become the site for National Eisteddfod and the meeting place, the Gorsedd; a stone circle was placed permanently within one of the spectacle hard standings. It stands, rather incongruously in the airfield landscape sited within one of the spectacle dispersals (*Figure 37*).

7.4 PCNPA Policy

The site is owned and managed by the PCNPA and their policy is 'to safeguard and enhance its nature conservation and landscape importance and to facilitate public enjoyment through informal access and recreation'. It is used as an informal recreation site by walkers, cyclists and horse riders (*Management Plan 1997-2000*).

Understanding airfield ecological restoration

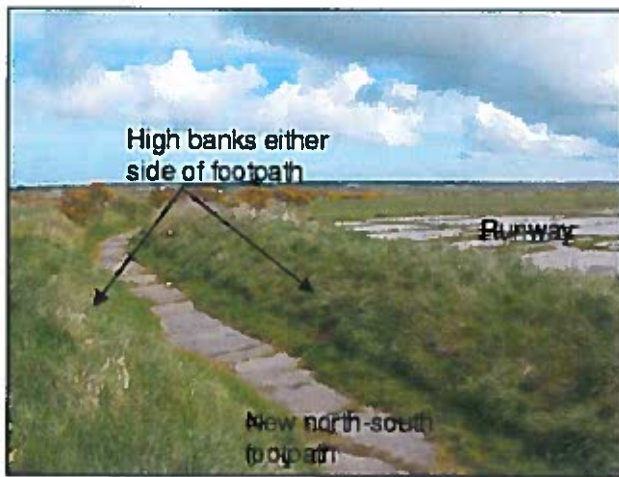


Figure 32 Re-instated footpath across site



Figure 35 Runway Surface

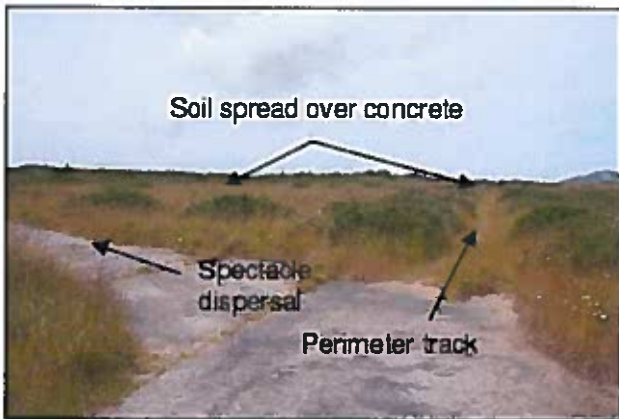


Figure 33 Perimeter and Dispersal (reduced width)



Figure 36 Part of airfield in private ownership



Figure 34 East-west bank of multi-user route



Figure 37 Gorsedd stone circle

Airfield Today

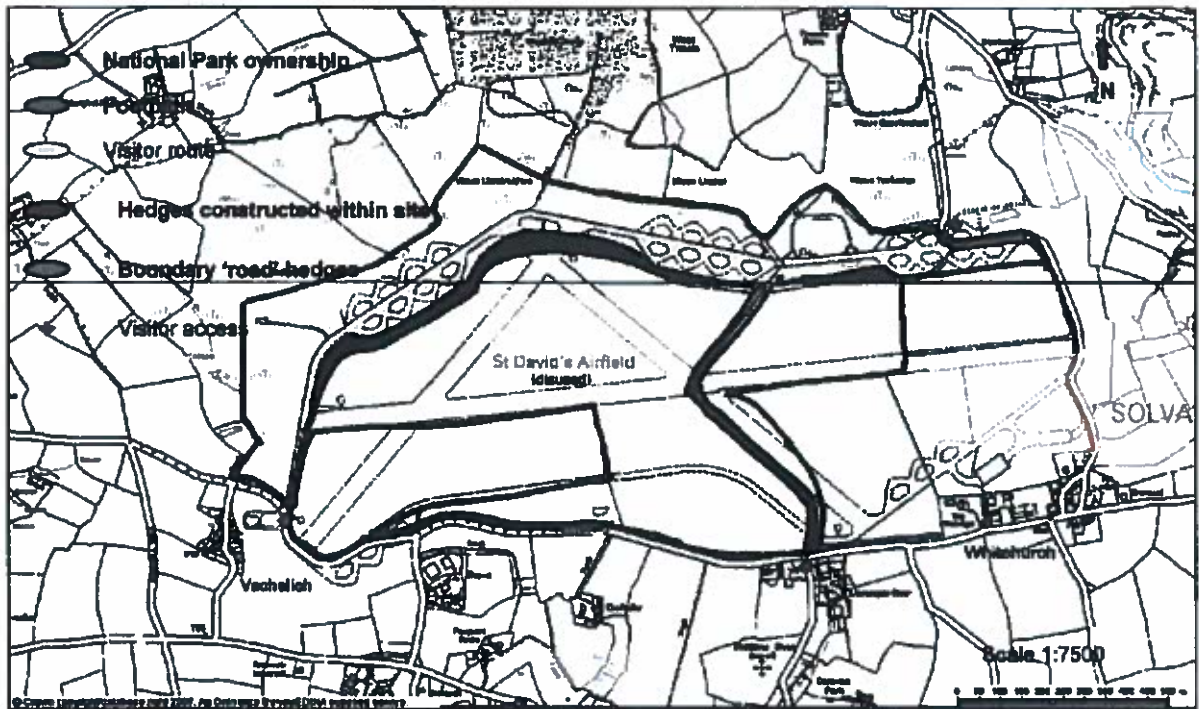


Figure 38 St David's Airfield Site and restoration work done by NPA



Pembrokeshire from the air

Figure 39 Aerial photograph , 2005, St David's Airfield

8 AIRFIELD ARCHAEOLOGY TODAY

8.1 Understanding the Airfield Site Today

The clean up operation by various agencies since the war has been so thorough that no buildings survive on the airfield. As a result of all the landscape restoration and habitat recreation works, what remains of the aviation archaeology, beyond the runways, is difficult to understand or even see. This is compounded by the fact that as this is virtually a flat landscape it can be difficult to make out the patterns of the dispersal points and perimeter road. There is only one information board, before entering the site, by Vachelich and there are no interpretation boards or maps within the site.

8.2 What Remains

The runways remain complete, and are still a very visible statement in the landscape especially as it is not physically possible to see from one end of the runway to the other as the scale is so large. The main runway is noticeably clearer than the subsidiary runways, as a result of it being maintained as a RLG. These runways were constructed in sectional blocks with expansion joints and the surface has inevitably cracked in places. Plant life has taken advantage of these joints and cracks in the concrete and the main runway will eventually and inevitably be more heavily colonised with plant life and take on a different, softer and greener appearance which may lessen its impact. The middle section of the main runway was strengthened in the 1960's by adding an additional surface layer which is a different colour from the original (*Figures 40-42*).

In the northern section, the two remaining complete dispersal points and the perimeter track have been considerably reduced in width, for reasons previously described in section 7.2. In several places along this part of the perimeter track are imprinted, in the concrete, a reminder of former inhabitants of the airfield who

were not entirely successfully excluded from the airfield during its construction (*Figures 43-45*).

The fused bomb store was built up and over the moorland in a loop off the perimeter track. The loop track is still visible raised up over the moor. On the lower ground some old boundary walls belonging to Llechell are just visible. The views across the unchanged moorland landscape to the farmland beyond, in changing light and changing seasons, are stunning. Whilst it is difficult to reconcile this place of beauty with the fact it once stored the agents of destruction, bombs, it is not only an important part of the history of the site itself but also of the war (*Figures 46-48*).

A second short diversion leads to what was the main incendiary and bomb stores. Only a very small fragment of what was once a large area survives as most of it was used as a landfill site by the local council until recently. A rectangular area about 5 metres by 3 metres with broken concrete faced brick walls survive as the shorter ends to high earth and stone banked walls. The high banked walls presumably built as safety features to absorb the impact of any explosion, a metal post is the only other feature now visible. In both bomb stores it is possible to see how the ground was built up, in some places to about 1.5 metres above the moorland (*Figures 49-53*). These bomb stores would have had the shortest period of use, possibly less than 6 months and no evidence exists as what appearance they would have taken.

Between the two bomb stores along the multi-user visitor track it is possible to see one half of a complete set of the spectacle dispersals which are behind a stock fence. All the dispersal points are built in the same sectional concrete material and style as the runways. Although this set has not been covered by soil they are rapidly becoming colonised by plant life (*Figure 54-55*).

A third, sectional concrete track is built out across the moorland which leads to the fallen remains of workshops, stores and battery charging rooms. The brick divisions and possible doorways of the various stores are visible in places in the concrete foundations. Here it is possible to see how the buildings and perimeter fencing were demolished by pushing the walls and fencing outwards to fall down over the lower moorland ground (*Figures 56-59*). Random piles of stones add to the confusion of the site, these piles of stones are habitat piles, marked on ecological management maps, created by the ecologists and should not be confused with archaeological ruins.

For reference the location of these features can be seen on both the historic airfield site plan and the modern photograph location map (*Figures 10 & 60*).

8.2 Summary

On the northern side of the airfield, on land owned by the PCNPA, the perimeter track and dispersal points survive today mainly as buried archaeology. Some evidence of the former bomb stores and workshops survive in a location over the moor where it is possible to get some idea of the construction of these features in a beautiful and still remote spot. On the southern side of the airfield, on land owned by the PCNPA, all evidence of the technical airfield buildings, control tower and hangar bases were demolished and the rubble buried.

On the privately owned farm land to the south-east of the airfield, the full width of the perimeter track and one hangar base are visible. One set of dispersal points have not been intentionally covered in soil but, on the ground, they are difficult to visualise as the plant life spreads from the expansion joints. The differences are well illustrated in the aerial photograph (*Figure 39*).

Runways



Figure 40 Secondary runway overgrown more overgrown than main runway



Figure 41 Main runway looking east

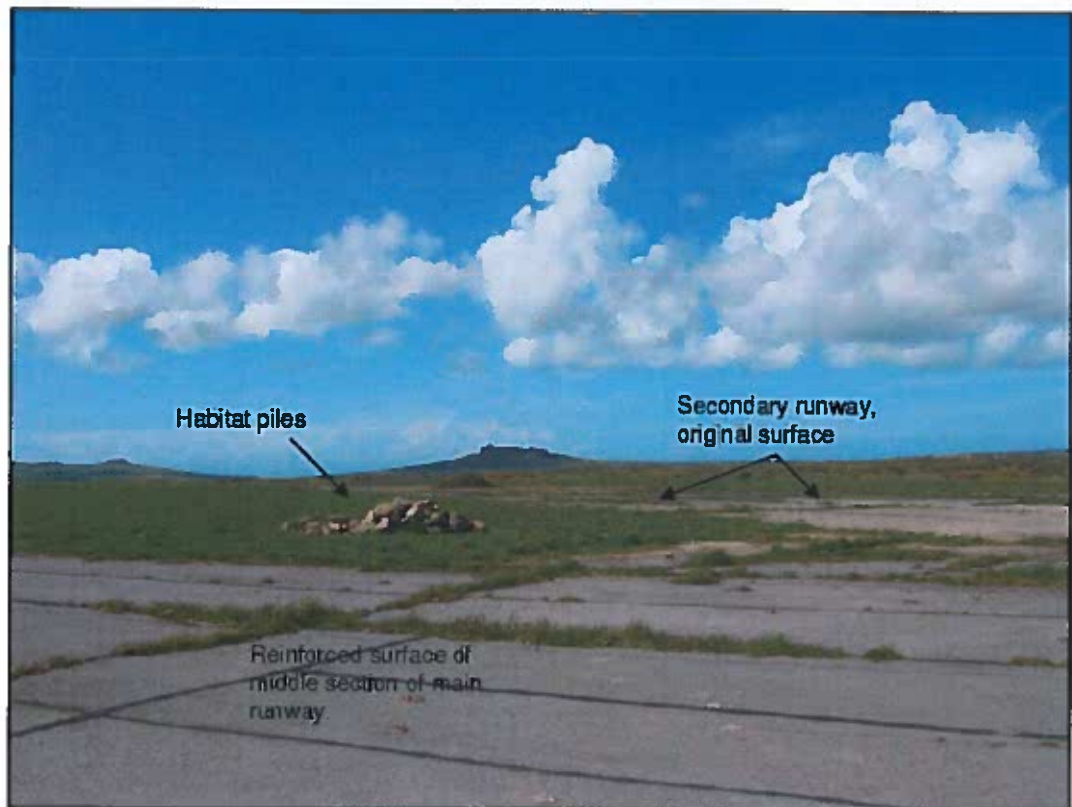


Figure 42 Main runway and secondary runway intersection

Fused Bomb Stores, perimeter track and footprints

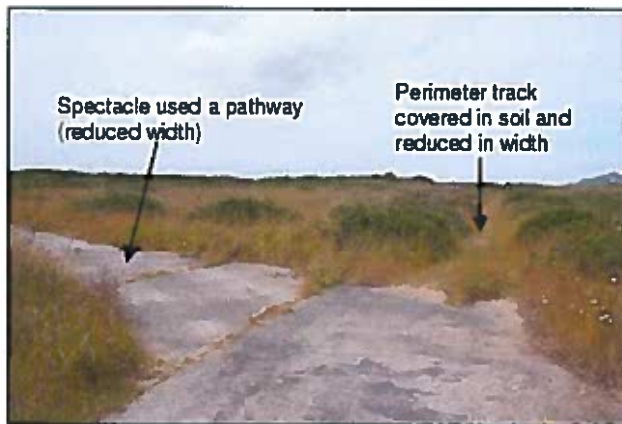


Figure 43 Dispersal and Perimeter



Figure 46 Bomb loop track



Figure 44 Perimeter

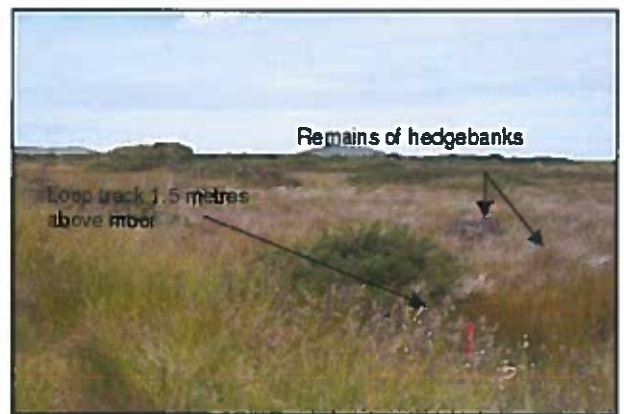


Figure 47 Llechell boundary walls



Figure 45 Prints in perimeter track



Figure 48 Unchanged Landscape

Remains of Bomb Stores

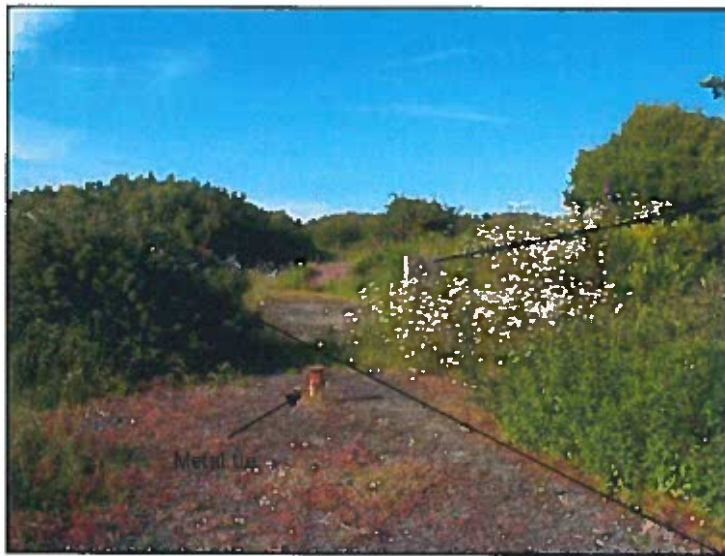


Figure 49 Rectangular enclosure



Figure 50 End wall standing



Figure 51 End wall collapsed



Figure 52 Grass and stone enclosure



Figure 53 Moorland reclaiming Bomb Dump

Spectacle Dispersals and remains of workshops and stores



Figure 54 Spectacle Dispersal



Figure 55 Close up dispersal



Figure 56 Track to Stores



Figure 57 Detail of individual store



Figure 58 Walls pushed out over moorland



Figure 59 Remains of perimeter fence

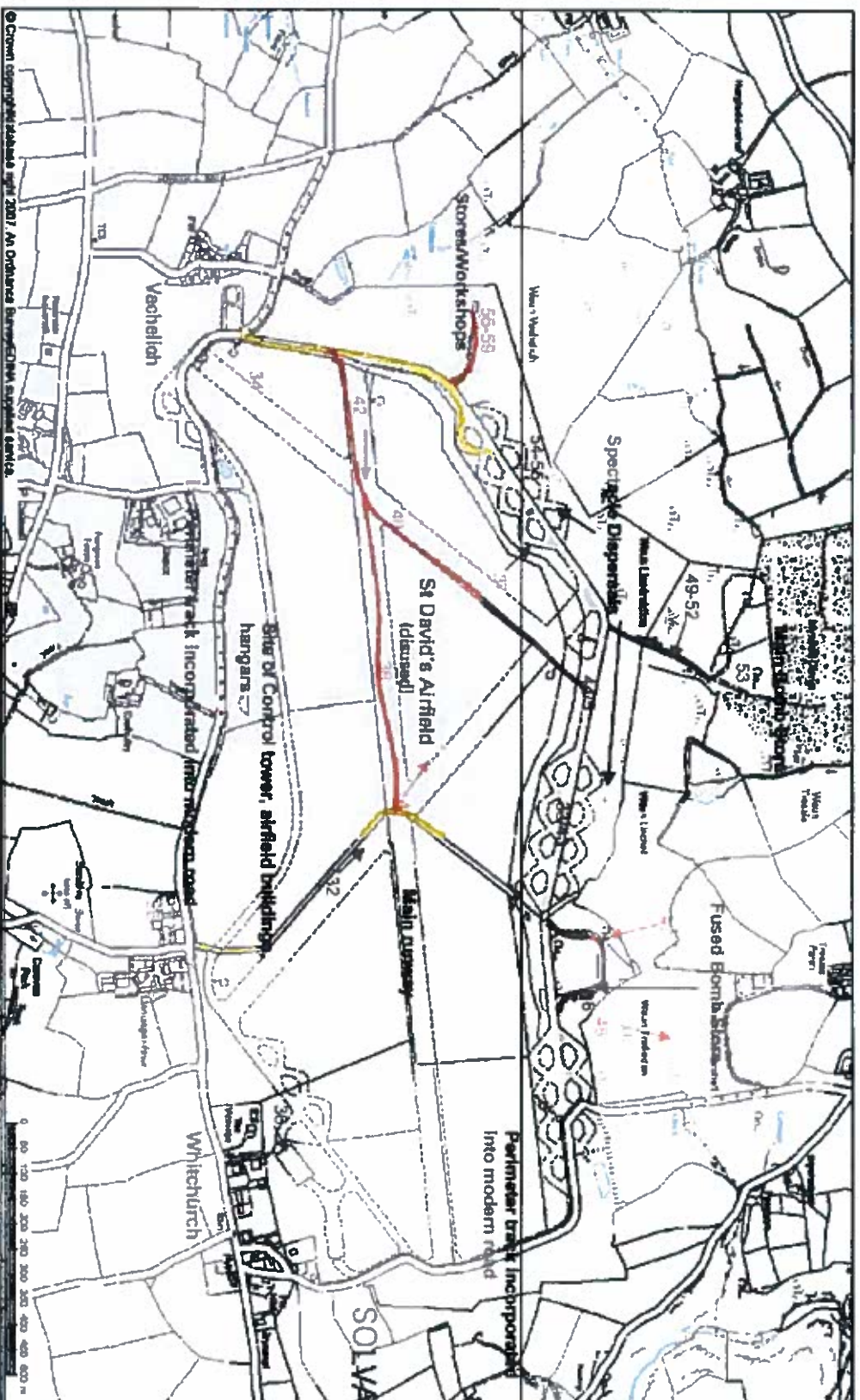


Figure 60

Photographic Locations and Possible Additional Visitor Survey Route

Numbers 24-59 (not inclusive) key to figure locations in report - sections 6-8

-  Current visitor route
-  Possible additional visitor route to include key remaining aviation archaeology

9 CRITIQUE OF RESTORATION WORKS

9.1 Ecological versus archaeological

So what has been gained from the restoration of landscapes and recreation of habitats at St David's airfield? There has been an immensely successful ecological recreation which has created a beautiful and much appreciated landscape by local people, but at the expense of the airfield archaeology. Could it have been different and could the restoration have included, at least some, of the military aviation features?

9.2 Hidden views lost meaning

The high hedge banks, similar to a Pembrokeshire hedge, either side of the re-instated north-south footpath across the mid-point of the airfield may have been a conscious attempt by the PCNPA to recreate a lost landscape, the footpath to Llechell. However, it is more likely they were attempting to obscure any view, which was considered to be an eyesore, of the impressive runways, an unusual feature in the Pembrokeshire landscape. Halfway along there is a break in the hedge, either side, giving access to the main runway which was inserted more for farming access than for pedestrians. Had the hedgebanks been created at a lower height, this cross path would have been the best place to view all runways and perhaps, get some idea of the scale of construction of the airfield. Neither was there any attempt in the landscape to recreate the old field patterns.

In order to create a multi-user route, east-west around the northern perimeter of the airfield a high bank was created, to the south of the route. This bank completely blocks any view of the runways and gives visitors no sense of scale to the once vast open nature of the airfield. The route weaves its way partly round the old perimeter road and partly through what were once the hard standings. Most of the spectacle dispersals were covered with a thin layer of top soil to

encourage plant growth, although one half of one set are still visible. These are off the path behind a stock fence which leads on to the moor where animals are grazed. There was no respect paid whatsoever to original pattern of the perimeter track and dispersals, the curving lines of these features were utilised to create a more interesting pathway through the site. As far as the archaeological remains are concerned a type of ecological vandalism was carried out at St David's airfield in the attempt, in the words of one ecologist to remove 'the the last vestiges of the airfield' (*PNCPA Management Plan*).

9.3 Lack of information

There are no information boards or maps within the site so visitors must not only find this site difficult to understand but are also unaware of any possible diversions from the main path. On the visitor route there are three possible side routes that could be taken to view the site of the two bomb stores and the few remains of the technical stores and workshops. This would enable the visitor to experience how the airfield was built up over the moor, one of them even has the advantage of being a loop walk. It is possible to gain access to the runways, either at the half-way point of the north-south footpath, or from the east-west path nearer to Vachelich, but it is not very obvious that one can do so. The runways are easily the most spectacular feature of this site.

9.4 Possible compromises

Had the multi-user route been planned to include part of the archaeology of the airfield, rather than obscure it, a compromise could have been easily reached. The tunnel like north-south path across the airfield could have had lower hedges, at least in part, so that the runways were visible. One set of spectacle dispersal hardstandings could have been left uncovered by soil so they would be more visible, with a full width of perimeter track uncovered. Plant life would inevitably colonise the expansion joints and cracks, but more slowly. The east-

west bank could have been routed at the western end to turn south-west and run alongside the runway, with the bank on the far side so the walk included, rather than totally excluded the runway. Even now it is not too late to rectify some of these errors and it would be possible to include some of these features and extend the visitor experience, for those who are interested, but this would need more information points/maps on site (*Figure 60*).

Not only is this site difficult to understand due to lack of information within the site but it is also difficult to find as it is not signposted from the major roads, nor is there any indication that you have reached the site when approaching from the north and south. Little wonder, as will be seen from the results of the surveys, that this site is only used by locals who all have prior knowledge of its existence. It would seem that this site is wasted opportunity as a tourist destination.

9.4 Outside the airfield-Dispersed Sites

Heyden Vaughan, the farmer at Llanwngar Fawr, whose farm is sited on the edge of the airfield regretted the loss of hedges in the vicinity of the airfield, saying that it not only changed the character of the landscape, but also the lack of shelter for livestock was a problem in this windswept plateau. He also said that the land he now farmed again was very stony. The stones brought up by the plough were those of the former hedgebanks and the farm buildings of Llechell that were flattened by the bulldozers in 1942.

9.5 Conclusion

The uninformed visitor today would find it difficult to understand the enormity of construction effort that went into building the airfield and would be mostly unaware it replaced a previous, more traditional Pembrokeshire farming landscape. Whilst an area of heathland was recreated, the pre-airfield landscapes were not restored; the human/cultural landscape features of the pre-war period are entirely absent.

A holistic approach should be taken when deciding the management of these sites, as the site is more than merely the sum of its parts. The equations of value are not constant or one dimensional. It is necessary to appreciate the interaction between value components. For example the perimeter track and runways have, not only heritage value, but an amenity value as pathways and cycle tracks and they have become an important habitat for both flora and fauna. However, at St David's Airfield, the environmental values have detracted from the archaeological ones.

10 SURVEY

10.1 Findings

As part of this report a visitor survey was carried out, during early June 2008, in order to find out how visitors used and understood the site. Fifty questionnaires were completed and the results of which, and a sample questionnaire, can be seen in Appendix 2.

The results show that visitors to the site are entirely local, the 80% of whom are walkers; just over half of these are dog walkers. Both of these groups visit either on a daily or several times a week. The majority, 66%, regard it as a low key leisure amenity site, 38% see it as an ecological site with 26% regarding it as an archaeological one. However 80% of those questioned found it difficult to recognise the historical features. All those spoken to kept to the designated path and did not deviate from it. All but 4% regarded St David's Airfield as part of the local heritage and 90% were aware that it was in the ownership of the PCNPA.

Some reflected on the conflict that had taken place here in 1944 and 44% of the users thought that a memorial to the airmen would be appropriate and 26% would like to see more information and better signposting from the main roads.

10.2 Conclusion

It was clear from talking to visitors to the site that they enjoyed the tranquility of it, so very different to when it was an airfield. There was informal access to the site before the PNCPA purchased it and now there is constant access. People living locally have formed a strong sense of ownership and attachment to the place but it means different things to different people, most notably between age groups. Some regard it as a place to get away from the tourists, an excellent place to exercise dogs and some just enjoy walking in the wide open spaces and enjoying the natural diversity. It is a safe place for young children to cycle with their families. The BBC Radio programme reinforced the special 'sense of place' idea and an older generation was proud to share their memories of the war-time airfield. It was this generation who most lamented the loss of Treflodan and Llechell and the fact that no record survived of it.

During the compilation of this report it became clear that the role of Coastal Command in West Wales, and in this part of Pembrokeshire in particular, is not well known or recognised. Some visitors thought that it would be fitting to have a memorial on the airfield to those who lost their lives during the war. Some visitors thought that the best memorial was to leave airfield as it is, letting nature take its course.

11 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUES

11.1 National and Global Significance

Throughout the Second World War, new airfields were built with concrete runways and perimeters with the technical and domestic sites scattered around the surrounding countryside and constructed from materials only intended to 'last for the duration'. There are no complete sites surviving from the Second World War period. Their fragmentary survival can be regarded as a consequence for their

intended use as transient settlement. This is in contrast with the permanent and tightly-defined sites characteristic of the inter-war period (*EH, 2003 Historic Military Aviation Sites*). St David's Airfield, as a military aviation site, has left a unique imprint on the Pembrokeshire landscape.

It would seem that these transitory sites have been ignored in the archaeological record; the emphasis has been on the military aviation sites of the pre-war period that had the more substantial buildings which survived. It could be argued, from a landscape archaeological view, these transitory airfields, with their previous settlement history, could become, in the future, as enigmatic as the Deserted Medieval Villages of an earlier era, especially if they are not well researched and recorded before they are destroyed or change irrevocably.

English Heritage takes the view that a selection of recent military sites should be preserved, not least in order to keep options open for future generations to decide their fate. But how they should be presented is a matter of debate. However, St David's airfield is a unique site in Pembrokeshire, for several reasons: The runways were maintained by the MoD until the mid nineties and the footprint of the runways and some of the dispersal points and perimeter survive unaltered. The visual impact of the runways in the landscape remains impressive. Finally the site has been much enhanced environmentally and ecologically by the hard work of the National Park. It presents itself in an aesthetically pleasing setting.

11.2 Local Significance- Value of Military Aviation Sites

'Historic features are part of the legacy that all landowners pass on to their successors. They play an important role in education and provide a sense of place and historical context for the community' (*CADW*).

There is great tourism and educational potential for linking this airfield site, the few remains of the dispersed sites, such as the blast shelter at site 12 that was

recommended to be conserved by Roger Thomas in 1993, the Emlych Farm memorial site and St David's cathedral. These could be linked with other airfield sites in Pembrokeshire, especially those of Coastal Command. These war-time settlements existed, changed the landscape in Pembrokeshire for such a short time, became derelict and then have all but disappeared.

St David's has a unique story to tell and most importantly has informal and constant access which will continue into the foreseeable future. The airfield is a contribution to local character and history.

The diverse flora and fauna and the successful skylark breeding grounds are partly a result of the airfield being left to slumber quietly until the PCNPA were able to purchase it in 1996 and enhance these habitats. Since then they have done a magnificent job in maintaining and creating new wild life habitats which are much appreciated by the locals who use the site regularly. The PNCPA has unquestionably enhanced the ecological value of what could otherwise be an unattractive desolate Second War derelict airfield, but in doing so has detracted from the archaeological values of the site.

Fortunately any undiscovered archaeology remains are sealed beneath the 20th century landscape as are the former settlements of Treflodan and Llechell. What now remains of the aviation archaeology will also be preserved for the future.

11.3 Vulnerability

Aviation sites are particularly vulnerable to change and demolition. Most airfield buildings were built along strictly functional lines for short term usage. The great majority of airfield buildings and runways, in place in 1945, were demolished soon after the war (*EH, 2003, Historic Military Aviation Sites*).

St David's experienced a period of relative inactivity after the war and many of the temporary and mainly unattractive buildings did not survive a period of neglect. The survival or demolition of the aviation buildings depended, to some extent, on their use immediately after the war. Some airfields were returned to agriculture and the farmers capitalised on the bonus of good military buildings that could be re-utilised as agricultural buildings. Dale, also within the Park, which closed as an airfield in 1947, has a good range of surviving military buildings, which are used by the local farmer. Otherwise, when in the public realm, there was systematic approach from the early days to recent times to 'clean up' the countryside and demolish the military eyesores.

There are examples of airfields within other National Parks such as Llanbedr, Snowdonia, built in 1938, and has been developed extensively since and recently been sold, amid much controversy to Kemble Air Services who will run, amongst other services, pleasure flights from the airfield. However, this has been opposed by the Campaign for National Parks (*Viewpoint*, 2008). There are the remains of several airfields within the New Forest National Park but these have either been developed commercially, as at Hum, or long since returned to agriculture and much of their original integrity lost. At St David's, the runways, perimeter track and some dispersal points are possibly the less altered than many sites, although partially buried.

Carew, Pembrokeshire, just outside the Park boundary, is an example of an ex-airfield site where the amenity (commercial values) has been promoted to the overall detriment of the environmental and archaeological values, except in one small isolated and disconnected corner where the control tower has been reconstructed.

At Dale, where a fair amount of wartime buildings survive, the airfield is in private hands on agricultural land owned by two separate owners, the problems are different again.

In a leaflet on Twentieth Century Military Sites, produced by Cadw, the role played by Wales in a century of human conflict outlines the human cost and war's effects on the landscape.

'Many sites have been destroyed as part of clearance and improvement programmes, but those that survive are of fundamental importance for helping us understand the momentous upheaval of events that occurred in Wales during the middle of the last century'

The greatest risk to St David's airfield would be the removal of the concrete for sustainable aggregate. Luckily the runways current value in terms of biodiversity outweighs, from an ecological point of view, any continuing impact of the landscape. In addition, test pits dug into the runway showed that concrete was of mammoth construction and not economically viable to reclaim. The runways will remain at St David's to make their own archaeological statement in the landscape.

Heyden Vaughan, the farmer at Llanwngar Fawr who bought back land on the southern part of the airfield, has no intention of removing the concrete that is on his land today. He said that while it did not add to the beauty of the landscape, it was part of it, and very useful for over wintering his cattle outside and storing equipment.

12 FUTURE RESEARCH

It is difficult to gauge just how unique the St David's site is without looking at other airfield sites in Pembrokeshire and then comparing them. It would have to be borne in mind that the factors are different for each and every site. At the present time, none of these temporary airfield sites built during the war has been considered to be worth preserving in either in its entirety, or in part, or indeed whether this would be possible. The role of Coastal Command in Wales should be better recognised and, perhaps, one such site could be acknowledged and

preserved both as a memorial and as an example of its kind. St David's would be a very strong candidate for this role. It is hoped that this study may prove useful as a guide and start to that research and acknowledgment.

13 **FINALLY**

Ironically the St David's airfield site may be better preserved than other airfield sites for posterity as a result of the restoration works by the PCNPA, the fact that it lay within a National Park and the majority of the site is owned by the Park. The PCNPA have turned what was deemed to be an unattractive, derelict site into a place of beauty. In future it should be borne in mind that covering up the concrete with a thin layer of soil, and thus preserving the footprint, has worked well, in places, at this site from ecological point of view and must be a better solution than the wholesale removal of features.

When standing on the runways it is still possible to appreciate the tremendous amount work that went into the construction of this airfield and feel that immense sense of open space and imagine the noise and power of the aircraft. Whilst the restoration works have been less than sympathetic to the military aviation concrete of the airfield, the magical sound of skylarks singing in the wide open space adds to the special feeling that this site engenders in some people. Today it is the sound of the skylark that is a potent evocation in the landscape, not the sound of a returning bomber, but we must not forget the bombers, for without them the skylark would not be singing in such numbers.

This contrast represents the balance that should be maintained in the future management of the site: between past and future, between archaeology and ecology, between bombers and skylarks.

In the not too distant future the war-time remains of this airfield may only be visible, at certain times of the year, as crop marks. In this study they have been

recorded along with the history of the entire landscape. Also recorded are the memories of those people involved with site, before, with the passage of time, those memories are lost. Some of this information needs to be disseminated to the visiting public. Possibly through a combination of all or some the following suggestions: The PNCPA's web site, information boards on site, maps of the airfield and a leaflet which acknowledges not only the ecological value of St David's airfield, but also the cultural and archaeological history.

Finding the right balance between change and preservation requires careful consideration and the need for an integrated management plan is paramount for such airfield sites which can have more than one role to fulfill.



Figure 61 Skylark landing ground June 2008

REFERENCES:

Haverfordwest Record Office

D/JF/1 Land requisition file for Ernest Walters
HDX/945/1 Pembrokeshire Airbases in the Second World War, 1983, unpublished
work by Wing Cdr. J. E. Tipton
Ordnance Survey Sheet XV13 1908 Scale 1:2500
PCC/HT/3/81 Pembrokeshire County Council File

National Archives

AIR 28/725 RAF St David's Form 540 HQ Historical Record (Daily log book-ORBS)
BD/28/62 Service land requirements Admiralty at St David's
COU 1/639 Admiralty requirement at St David's
COU 1/646 Acquisition of land 1952-53 with map of dispersed sites
IR/30/54/135 Tithe Map of the Parish of Whitchurch (in Dewisland Hundred) 1841
IR/29/54/135 Tithe Apportionment: Whitchurch (in Dewisland Hundred)

MAF 32/1313/60 National Farm Survey, Whitchurch
MAF 73/64 Index to Maps
MAF 32/62/15 1908 OS Maps of Farms in Survey
PCC/HT/3/81 File of Local Authority Letters

National Library of Wales

RAF Photographs Oblique

0074 540/384 Height 2500 25/07/1950
965-016-64 1962 17/07/1972

RAF Photographs Vertical

72/256 516&517 Height 7500' 17/07/1972
2.52 HA/495 IPRU Height 2500 24/4/1942

RAF Museum Archive Hendon

BD/54/16 St David's Airfield Plan No. 4718/45
BD/54/17 St David's Airfield Dispersed Sites Plan No. 4719/45
X004-8439/002/026 Nissen hut Photograph

Maps Downloaded from Edina <http://edina.ac.uk>

1st Edition Ordnance Survey County Series 1:10560 Pembrokeshire 1889
3rd Revision Ordnance Survey County Series 1:10560 Pembrokeshire 1953
Carto 1:7500
Dudley Stamp Land Utilisation Survey 1:63306 Whitchurch 1931-1935

Other Sources of Maps

Anquet Maps Ordnance Survey Pembrokeshire Coast National Park 2004

Pembrokeshire National Coastal Park (PNCPA)

Pembrokeshire National Coastal Park Authority Management Plan 1997-2000
And associated files

Leaflets and unpublished documents

Cadw (Welsh Historic Monuments)

Twentieth Century Military Sites leaflet 2008

English Heritage

Thomas, R., 1994: *Survey of the 19th and 20th Century Military Buildings of Pembrokeshire.*

Historic Military Aviation Sites, 2003

Twentieth-Century Military Sites, 2003

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Newsletter June 2008

Sanctuary, Ministry of Defence Estates Conservation Magazine, Issue 32, 2003

Viewpoint: Friends of the Campaign for National Parks. *Issue 52*, summer 2008

Media

BBC radio Wales Country Focus August 17th 2008

Internet Sites

<http://www.cambria.org.uk/HLC/StDavids> Historic Landscape Characterisation, 2008

<http://timezone.newport.ac.uk/staff/mg/JWEH/JWEH-WXYZ.html> (Index to the
Historical Society of the Church in Wales)

Personal Comment

All the people below were local to the airport and had lived in the area all their lives with the exception of Air Commodore Vaughan who had grown up at Llanwngar Farm and had subsequently moved away.

Mr. A. James,

Mr R Griffiths

Mr. D Jones,

Mr. D Page,

Mr. Wyn Thomas

Mr. H Vaughan,

Air Commodore M.C.M. Vaughan

Frondeg, Caerhendryn

St David's Local History Society

Penparc Village Shop

Solva and Nine Wells

Treforgan, Whitchurch

Llanwngar Farm

Wantage, Oxon

Photographs

All photographs by author unless otherwise stated

Other Photographs

John Evans Photographic collection The Pembroke Dock Sunderland Trust

Publications

- Churchill, W., 1985, *The Second World War: Their Finest Hour*. Houghton Mifflin, NY.
- Delve, K., 2007, *The Military Airfields of Britain: Wales and the West Midlands*, Crowood Press, Marlborough.
- Driver, T., 2007, *Pembrokeshire Landscapes from the Air*, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth
- Evans, R., & John, B., 1973. *The Pembrokeshire Landscape*, H G Walters, Tenby.
- Innes, G., 1995. *British Airfield Building World War 11: Pocket Aviation Guide*, Midland Publishing.
- John, B., 1988. *The Geology of Pembrokeshire*, Abercastle Publications, Fishguard
- Jones, I., 2007, *Airfields and Landing Grounds of Wales: West*, Tempus, Stroud

Other useful sources of information useful for airfield studies that were consulted but not necessarily directly referenced in this study include:

Airfield Research Group	018420765399
Peter Davids, St David's History Society	01437 720253
John Evans, Sunderland Flying Trust	sunderlandtrust@btconnect.com
Martin Roberts, Croescogh Local History Group	01348 837805
Medwyn Parry, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth	01970 632800
John Schofield, English Heritage	John.Schofield@english-heritage.org.uk
Roger Thomas, English Heritage	rogerjc.thomas@english-heritage.org.uk
Royal Airforce Museum, Hendon	020 8205 2266

APPENDIX A

Short Agricultural Farm Survey Breakdown

Farm Survey Llechell	915
Farm Survey Treflodan	928
Farm Survey Treflodan	933
Farm Survey Treflodan	939
Farm Survey Llanwngar Fawr	929

Short Agricultural Farm Survey, June 1941 compiled from MAFF									
Name	Place	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Corn	Mangolds*	Kale *	Swedes Turnips*	Rape Potatoes
W J Owen	Treflodan	3 00	6 00	12 00				0.25	1.50
Joseph James	Treflodan		2 00	4 00					0.50
M R Vaughan	Llanwgar Fawr	3 00	12 00	15 00		2.50	3.00	5.00	2.75
W G Morgan	Croftuly	2 00	35 00	26 00	9 00				4.50
Oliver Reynolds	Vachelick		2.50	2.50					0.25
E J Preece	Vachelick								
Ernest Walters	Leckell		8 00	9 00			0.50		1.50
J H Thomas	Llanwgar Fach		7.25	23.75		2 00	4.00	3.50	2.50
Name	Place	Clover for mowing	Grass for mowing	Permanent Grass mowing	Permanent grazing	rough grazing			
W J Owen	Treflodan		14 00		18 00				
Joseph James	Treflodan		4 00		12.50				
M R Vaughan	Llanwgar Fawr	10 00	34 00		34 00				
W G Morgan	Croftuly	16 00	12 50	12 50	48 00				
Oliver Reynolds	Vachelick			3 00	3.75				
E J Preece	Vachelick			3 00	5.25				
Ernest Walters	Leckell	7 00		3 00	12 00	15 00			
J H Thomas	Llanwgar Fach	13 50		7 50	41 50	4 50			
Name	Place	Milk Cattle	Steers fat	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry	Horses	workers	
W J Owen	Treflodan	28		12	1	63	2	1	
Joseph James	Treflodan	12		11	1	21	1	0	
M R Vaughan	Llanwgar Fawr	60			15	45	4	3	
W G Morgan	Croftuly	61		44	9	166	9	0	
Oliver Reynolds	Vachelick	11			1	20	2	0	
E J Preece	Vachelick	5			2	37	0	0	
Ernest Walters	Leckell	23		27	24	30	6	0	
J H Thomas	Llanwgar Fach	51	20		14	26	5	1	
Farm	Name	Owner	Acres	Rent	Tenure in yrs	Engines	Tractors	Labourers	
Croftuly	W G Morgan	Tenant	165	£160 00		1 @ 6HP	no	no	
Leckell	Ernest Walters	Owner	54	£55 00	33	1 @ 6HP	no	no	
Llanwgar	J H Thomas	Owner	120	not given	17	1 @ 5HP	none	1	
Treflodan	W J Owen	Tenant	60	£108 00		8 none	none	no	
Treflodan	Joseph James	Tenant	not given	£40 00	15	none	none	no	
Vachelick	Oliver Reynolds	Owner	12	not given	60	none	no	no	
Clover, Sanfoin and Temporary Grasses for mowing this season									
Clover, Sanfoin and Temporary Grasses for grazing this season									
Permanent Grass for Mowing									
Permanent Grass for Grazing									
Rough Grazing, mountain, heath or moor on which occupier has sole grazing rights									
These returns were short forms and filled in by the farmers in June 1941. The record is not complete.									
The farm survey was carried in this area in the January of 1942 by experienced farmers. There is sometimes a discrepancy in figures such as acreage, figures are given in acres.									
* grown as fodder									
None of the farms in the area were very large and with little mechanisation, it was hard work									
It was mainly a dairy farming area with some chicken farming. Smaller amounts of sheep and pigs were kept, some obviously only for home consumption.									

PEMBROKE
County Lettington Parish Whitchurch Code No. PK/29/60/1
District Lettington Name of holding Leckell Name of farmer Mrs Ernest J. Walters
Address of farmer Leckell Solva
Number and edition of 6-inch Ordnance Survey Sheet containing farmstead XV. 5W. 1908.

A. TENURE.

1. Is occupier tenant
owner ☒
2. If tenant, name and address of owner:—
.....
.....
3. Is farmer full time farmer ☒
part time farmer
spare time farmer
hobby farmer
other type
Other occupation, if any:—

4. Does farmer occupy other land?

Name of Holding	County	Parish

5. Has farmer grazing rights over land not occupied by him?

If so, nature of such rights—

Common land
15 Acres of moor

B. CONDITIONS OF FARM.

1. Proportion (%) of area on which soil is

Heavy	Medium	Light	Peaty
<u>20</u>	<u>80</u>		
2. Is farm conveniently laid out? Yes
Moderately
No
3. Proportion (%) of farm which is naturally

Good	Fair	Bad
<u>80</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
4. Situation in regard to road ☒
5. Situation in regard to railway ☒
6. Condition of farmhouse ☒
- Condition of buildings ☒
7. Condition of farm roads ☒
8. Condition of fences ☒
9. Condition of ditches ☒
10. General condition of field drainage ☒
11. Condition of cottages NONE
12. Number of cottages within farm area 0
Number of cottages elsewhere 0
13. Number of cottages let on service tenancy 0
14. Is there infestation with:—
rabbits and moles ☒
rats and mice ☒
rooks and wood pigeons ☒
other birds ☒
insect pests ☒
15. Is there heavy infestation with weeds? ☒
If so, kinds of weeds:—
16. Are there derelict fields? Yes
If so, acreage ☒

C. WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

- Water supply:—
1. To farmhouse ☒
2. To farm buildings ☒
3. To fields Ponds
4. Is there a seasonal shortage of water? ☒
- Electricity supply:—
5. Public light ☒
Public power ☒
Private light ☒
Private power ☒
6. Is it used for household purposes? ☒
Is it used for farm purposes? ☒

D. MANAGEMENT.

1. Is farm classified as A, B or C? 3
2. Reasons for B or C:—
old age
lack of capital
personal failings
If personal failings, details:—

3. Condition of arable land ☒
4. Condition of pasture ☒
5. Use of fertilisers on:—
arable land ☒
grass land ☒

Field information recorded by

D. Harris

Date of recording Jan 21 / 42

This primary record completed by

H. Parry

Date 30/6/42

E. GENERAL COMMENTS.

*This farmer is not sparingly with artificial manures.
The land looks clean, and in good heart, and looked after.
Production good all round.*

F. GRASS FIELDS PLOUGHED UP.

Field Ordnance Survey Number and edition	Parish	Crops Sown	Under W.A.R.F.'s direction	
			Yes	No
1908. XV. SW.	Whitchurch	Alco		
For 1940 harvest				
		None		
For 1941 harvest				
1908 XV. SW.		7.459 Oaks		X

County **PEMBROKE** District **Lettleston** Parish **Whitchurch**
 Name of holding **Treflodan** Name of farmer **Mrs Joseph James**
 Address of farmer **Treflodan Solva.**
 Number and edition of 6-Inch Ordnance Survey Sheet containing farmstead **XY. 54. 1908**

A. TENURE.

1. Is occupier tenant ... ☒ owner ... ☐
2. If tenant, name and address of owner:
Mrs Griffiths
Jointly Castle
Haverfordwest.
3. Is farmer full time farmer ... ☐
 part time farmer ... ☐
 spare time farmer ... ☒
 hobby farmer ... ☐
 other type ... ☐
 Other occupation, if any:
Mason contractor

4. Does farmer occupy other land? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Name of Holding	County	Parish

5. Has farmer grazing rights over land not occupied by him? ... ☒ Yes ☐ No
 If so, nature of such rights:—

B. CONDITIONS OF FARM.

1. Proportion (%) of area on which soil is

Heavy	Medium	Light	Peaty
	100		
2. Is farm conveniently laid out? Yes ... ☐
 Moderately ... ☒
 No ... ☐
3. Proportion (%) of farm which is naturally ... ☒ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Bad
 100
4. Situation in regard to road ... ☒
5. Situation in regard to railway ... ☒
6. Condition of farmhouse ... ☒
- Condition of buildings ... ☒
7. Condition of farm roads ... ☒
8. Condition of fences ... ☒
9. Condition of ditches ... ☒
10. General condition of field drainage ... ☒
11. Condition of cottages ... ☒ None
12. Number of cottages within farm area ... ☒ None
 Number of cottages elsewhere ... ☒ None
13. Number of cottages let on service tenancy ... ☒ None
14. Is there infestation with:—
 rabbits and moles ... ☒
 rats and mice ... ☒
 rooks and wood pigeons ... ☒
 other birds ... ☒
 insect pests ... ☒
15. Is there heavy infestation with weeds? ☒
 If so, kinds of weeds:—
16. Are there derelict fields? ... ☒ Yes ☐ No
 If so, acreage ... ☒

C. WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

- Water supply:—
 1. To farmhouse ... ☒
 2. To farm buildings ... ☒
 3. To fields ... ☒
- | Pipe | Well | Roof | Stream | Other |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
4. Is there a seasonal shortage of water? ... ☒ Yes ☐ No
- Electricity supply:—
 5. Public light ... ☒
 Public power ... ☒
 Private light ... ☒
 Private power ... ☒
 6. Is it used for household purposes? ... ☒
 Is it used for farm purposes? ... ☒

D. MANAGEMENT.

1. Is farm classified as A, B or C? ... ☒ B
2. Reasons for B or C:—
 old age ... ☐
 lack of capital ... ☐
 personal failings ... ☒

If personal failings, details:—

Mason by trade, and unable to look after his farm, as he should, although the cattle looks very well, good land but not producing enough to the country's need.

- | | Good | Fair | Poor | Bad |
|---------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|------|-----|
| 3. Condition of arable land ... | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 4. Condition of pasture ... | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
- | | Adequate | To some extent | Not at all |
|---|----------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 5. Use of fertilisers on:—
arable land ... | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |
| grass land ... | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | |

Field information recorded by

D. Harris

Date of recording *Jan 20/42*

This primary record completed by

H. Pary

Date *29/6/42*

[illegible]

This small holding called 'neglodon', is very scattered, nearly all the fields are joining to neighbours fields. I presume it is by nature good land, for cattle & corn, but this farmer is not producing to the country's needs as he should, in live stock, and other crops.
Production fair.

F. GRASS FIELDS PLOUGHED UP.

Field Ordnance Survey Number and edition	Parish	Crops Sown	Under W.A.E.C.'s direction	
			Yes	No
1908. XV. SW XXI. NW	Whitchurch	For 1940 harvest		
543	Pembury	1.270 Oats	x	
554	"	1.838 "	x	
555	"	1.300 Wheat	x	
486	"	2.403 "	x	
495	"	1.584 "	x	
1908 XV. SW. XXI. NW	Pt. Gwynedd	For 1941 harvest		
315	"	2.429 Flax.	x	
317	"	1.841 "	x	
465	Pembury	1.825 Oats	x	
467	"	1.257 Barley	x	

FARM SURVEY

County **DEMBROKE**
 District **Lutterston**
 Name of holding **Lutterston**
 Address of farmer **Lutterston**
 Number and edition of Basic Ordnance Survey Sheet containing farmstead **XV. 5W 1908**

Parish **Whitchurch**
 Name of farmer **Mr William Owen**
 Code No. **PK 124 60 25**

A. TENURE.

1. Is occupier tenant ... ☒ **x**
 owner ... ☐

2. If tenant, name and address of owner:—
Mr R. O. Jones
Trerhewell
Malton

3. Is farmer full time farmer ... ☒ **x**
 part time farmer ... ☐
 spare time farmer ... ☐
 hobby farmer ... ☐
 other type ... ☐
 Other occupation, if any:—

4. Does farmer occupy other land? ☒ **7** Yes ☐ No

Name of holding **fields at Lutterston 112 acres** County **Yorks.** Parish **Whitchurch**
all included in 60 acres
all included in 60 acres

5. Has farmer grazing rights over land not occupied by him? ... ☒ **x**
 If so, nature of such rights:—
Common land 20 Acres of hill & moor

B. CONDITIONS OF FARM.

1. Proportion (%) of area on which soil is

Heavy	Medium	Light	Peaty
	85	15	

2. Is farm conveniently laid out? Yes ... ☐ Moderately ☒ **x** No ... ☐

3. Proportion (%) of farm which is

Good	Fair	Bad
60	25	15

4. Situation in regard to road ... ☒ **x**

5. Situation in regard to railway ... ☐

6. Condition of farmhouse ... ☒ **x**

Condition of buildings ... ☒ **x**

7. Condition of farm roads ... ☒ **x**

8. Condition of fences ... ☒ **x**

9. Condition of ditches ... ☒ **x**

10. General condition of field drainages ... ☒ **x**

11. Condition of cottages ... ☒ **None**

12. Number of cottages within farm area ... ☒ **None**
 Number of cottages elsewhere ... ☒ **None**

13. Number of cottages let on service tenancy ... ☒ **None**

14. Is there infestation with:—
 rabbits and moles ... ☒ **x**
 rats and mice ... ☒ **x**
 rooks and wood pigeons ... ☒ **x**
 other birds ... ☒ **x**
 insect pests ... ☒ **x**

15. Is there heavy infestation with weeds? ☒ **x**
 If so, kinds of weeds:—

16. Are there derelict fields? ... ☒ **x**

C. WATER AND ELECTRICITY.

Water supply:—
 1. To farmhouse ... ☒ **x**
 2. To farm buildings ... ☒ **x**
 3. To fields ... ☐

4. Is there a seasonal shortage of water? ... ☒ **x**

Electricity supply:—
 5. Public light ... ☒ **x**
 Public power ... ☒ **x**
 Private light ... ☒ **x**
 Private power ... ☒ **x**
 6. Is it used for household purposes? ... ☒ **x**
 Is it used for farm purposes? ... ☒ **x**

D. MANAGEMENT.

1. Is farm classified as A, B or C? ... ☒ **B**

2. Reasons for B or C:—
 old age ... ☐
 lack of capital ... ☐
 personal failings ... ☒ **x**

If personal failings, details:—
Lack of manure for grassland.
pastured not cemented, not according to present day needs.

	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad
3. Condition of arable land ...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x			
4. Condition of pasture ...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x		

	Adequate	To some extent	Not at all
5. Use of fertilisers on:— arable land ...		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x	
grass land ...		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> x	

Field information recorded by **D. Harris**
 Date of recording **Jan 21 / 42**
 This primary record completed by **A. Parry**
 Date **29/6/42**

F. GRASS FIELDS PLOUGHED UP.

Field Ordnance Survey Number and edition	Parish	Crops Sown	Under W.A.E.C. direction	
			Yes	No
1908. XV. SW.	Whitechurch	For 1910 harvest		
534	"	3.519 Data	x	
534 pt	"	2.500 "	x	
1908. XV. SW.		For 1941 harvest		
529		1.919 Data	x	
538		1.438 Flax & Barley	x	
541		4.769 Data	x	

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Letter

Questionnaire Pages

Questionnaire Breakdown of Results

Pembrokeshire Coast Path News Flash

**Greenbank
Shepherds Hill
Buxted
East Sussex
TN22 4PX**

01825 890372

June 2008

Questionnaire/Oral History

I am a student at the University of Bristol studying for an MA in Landscape Archaeology. My dissertation relates to St David's Airfield and this research consists of studying significance, importance and preservation of the airfield. This research is being carried out as part of work experience with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

All information provided will be compiled and used in my research project only. You are quite welcome to provide additional information and if you wish to contact me, my contact details are provided on this letter.

Thank you very much for your time.

Vivienne Blandford

Email:

blandford@blandford.co.uk

St. David's Airfield Questionnaire:
Section A:

June 2008

What is your reason for visiting the airfield today?

- Walking..... ☐
- Ecological/Nature Reserve..... ☐
- Dog Walking..... ☐
- Cycling..... ☐
- Other (please state)..... ☐
- How did you first hear about the site? ☐

.....
.....
.....

How often do you visit the airfield?

- Daily..... ☐
- Weekly..... ☐
- Monthly..... ☐
- Less often..... ☐
- Once off..... ☐

How did you arrive at the airfield?

- Car..... ☐
- Walking..... ☐
- Bicycle..... ☐

How far have you travelled?

- Less than 1 mile..... ☐
- 1-3 miles..... ☐
- 5-10 miles..... ☐
- Do you live locally ☐
- Are you a visitor ☐
- ☐

Do you or your family have any connection with airfield site?

- No..... ☐
- Yes (please give details)..... ☐

.....
.....
.....

Email:

blandford@blandford.co.uk

St. David's Airfield Questionnaire:
Section B:

June 2008

Do you personally consider this site to have any of the following values as?

- An archaeological/historical site..... ☐
- An environmental/ecological site..... ☐
- A leisure amenity site..... ☐

.....

.....

.....

Do you think it is easy to recognise the historical features?

- Yes..... ☐
- No..... ☐

Do you consider this site to be an important part of the local heritage?

- Yes..... ☐
- No..... ☐

Is there anything else you would like to see at this site?

- More information on the history of the airfield..... ☐
- A memorial to those who served here (or similar)..... ☐
- Have you any ideas as to how this site could be improved

(Please put your comments/ideas below)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Email:

blandford@blandford.co.uk

Summary of results of Questionnaire carried out at St David's Airfield	
Reason for visiting the site	centage
Walking	38.00%
Cycling	12.00%
Dog Walking	42.00%
Riding	8.00%
How often visited	
Daily	34.00%
Weekly	42.00%
Monthly	12.00%
Less	4.00%
Once off	8.00%
Method of transport	
Car	58.00%
Walking	22.00%
Cycling	12.00%
Horse	8.00%
How far travelled to site	
Less than one mile	42.00%
1-3 miles	46.00%
5-10 miles	12.00%
Any connections with the site	
Yes	10.00%
Aware of NPA Ownership	
Yes	90.00%
No	10.00%
Values of site (answer more than one if appropriate)	
Archaeological	26.00%
Ecological	38.00%
Amenity	66.00%
Easy to recognise historic features	
Yes	20.00%
No	80.00%
Important part of local heritage?	
Yes	96.00%
No	4.00%
Ideas for site (answer more than one if appropriate)	
Memorial to airmen	44.00%
More Information on the site, within the site	26.00%
What is the Gorsedd?	2.00%
Think NPA have done good restoration	12.00%
Wish to see all land returned to farmland	2.00%
Provide some seats	6.00%
Dog waste bins to be provided	2.00%
Better signage from main roads	10.00%
Repaint/preserve runway markings	2.00%
50 questionnaires were completed during late May/early June	
at different times in the weekday and at weekends, by three interviewers	

For immediate release

Monday June 30th, 2008

Help airfield archaeology research take flight

Pembrokeshire people with memories of St Davids Airfield are being urged to tell their stories to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

The former Second World War RAF airfield is now an important site for nature conservation, owned and managed by the Authority, and a survey is underway to find out more about the site's history.

As well as chatting with walkers and horse riders on site, Vivienne Blandford - who is conducting the research - is keen to hear from anyone else who can help.

Vivienne, an MA student in Landscape Archaeology at Bristol University, who is working with Authority Archaeologist Polly Groom, said: "You can find out about planes and airfields by looking through text books but I am interested in the human perspective: how local people can remember the impact the airfield had on everyday life.

"So I am looking for human stories from before, during and after the Second World War. We know there were RAF Coastal Command boys stationed here who married local girls. Although it was temporary, the runways still exist so it is an evocative place. We also know there were two farmsteads on the site before the war. Different generations value the airfield for different reasons and I'd like to hear from as many people as possible."

"If anyone has any photographs of the site or the camps where the airfield staff lived they would be invaluable in my efforts to reconstruct the landscape as it was either before or during the war."

The area echoed to the roar of Halifax bombers when the airfield opened in 1943. It was in operation for less than a year but had various uses after the war; it remained an emergency runway for nearby Brawdy until the early 1990s.

The National Park Authority bought the site in 1998 and visitors now enjoy the sounds of skylarks and the sight of wild flowers after the Authority restored native habitats high in biodiversity.

Archaeologist Polly Groom added: "What we'd like to assess from Vivienne's research is how important the airfield is to people, which bits are important and what else - if anything - they think the Authority might do to manage it in future."

If you can provide memories or photos of the airfield, call Polly on 0845 345 7275.

Issued by Laura Ridgway, National Park Authority Communications, tel 01646 624822, email laurar@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk