

**Cwm-yr-Onen Colliery,
Mynydd-y-Betws, Ammanford,
Carmarthenshire.**

Archaeological Watching Brief



By

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April 2012

**HRSWales
Report No: 128**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Cwm-yr-Onen Colliery, Mynydd-y-Betws, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire.

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Prepared for:

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On behalf of:

Date: April 2012

HRSW Report No: 128

The logo for Heritage Recording Services Wales features the word 'Heritage' in a large, stylized serif font, with 'Recording Services Wales' in a smaller, sans-serif font below it. A small crest or emblem is positioned between the two lines of text.

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Non Technical Summary

The following report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales (HRS Wales) during all top soil stripping and other ground disturbances associated with the coal open cast site of Cwm-y-onen on top of Mynydd-y-Betws, Cwmgors, near Ammanford, on behalf of Glo Bryn Colliery Coal Ltd. The report follows on from the results of an earlier archaeological desk based assessment undertaken by HRS Wales in 2010.

The watching brief on all top soil stripping and ground disturbance in the development boundary discovered only one instance where archaeological remains became exposed, in the form of the fortuitous recovery of a small fragment of prehistoric flint, identified as a residual flint knapping flake, found lying on the surface of the natural clay in an area of shallow covering peat.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales (HRS Wales) during all top soil stripping and other ground disturbances associated with the coal open cast site of Cwm-y-onen on top of Mynydd-y-Betws, Cwmgors, near Ammanford, on behalf of Bryn Bach Coal Ltd. The report follows on from the results of an earlier archaeological desk based assessment undertaken by the author on behalf of Cambrian Archaeological Projects in 2009 (CAP Report No. 589), which formed part of a larger Environmental Statement.
- 1.2 HRS Wales were contracted by Bryn Bach Coal Ltd to carry out the archaeological watching brief on the proposed scheme beginning in January 2011. Extraction work was completed in December 2011.

Background of proposals

- 1.3 The planning proposal was submitted to the local planning authority, Carmarthenshire County Council (henceforth - CCC) by Glo Bryn Colliery Coal Ltd (planning application Reference Number. E/23173).
- 1.4 Outline planning permission was granted by CCC for the proposed development subject to an archaeological Condition 21 as laid out below.

"No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority".

- 1.5 A project specification was prepared by Richard Scott Jones (BA, MA, MIFA), of Heritage Recording Services Wales (henceforth – HRS Wales) at the request of Chris James of Glo Bryn Colliery Coal Ltd during January 2011, which provided information on the methodology, which was to be employed by HRS Wales during the archaeological watching brief at the site during top soil stripping and any other subsequent ground disturbance work where archaeological remains may be encountered.
- 1.6 The purpose of the proposed archaeological watching brief was to provide CCC with the information that they had requested from Glo Bryn Bach Colliery Coal Ltd., the requirements for which are set out in *Planning Policy WALES, March 2002, Section 6.5, and Welsh Office Circular 60/96.*

- 1.7 The details set out in this specification follow a brief prepared by the Curatorial Section of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT), who act as archaeological advisers to CCC. DAT recommended that a watching brief be carried out during the top soil stripping prior to coal extraction work.

Site Location and Description

- 1.8 The proposed open casting site was sited on land known as Cwm-y-onen atop Mynydd-y-Betws, accessed via along a track via Henrhyd farm, located off the mountain road linking Rhyd y Fro (Pontardawe) to Betws (Ammanford) SN 67851060.
- 1.9 The immediate surrounding landscape is home to a large number of significant archaeological sites of all periods, from Bronze Age cairn cemeteries, a medieval castle site, through to small post-medieval settlement sites and fairly extensive post medieval industrial activity focused on coal extraction. Sites include levels, shafts, pits and tips.

Geology

- 1.10 The geology of the assessment area includes rocks of Carboniferous Upper and Middle Coal Series which includes seams rich in anthracite coal and some iron ore, the exploitation of which has contributed much to the history of the surrounding landscape. Hard carboniferous Millstone Grits outcrop in the northern areas of Mynydd y Betws, which have long been quarried for silica sand and building stone (*British Geological Survey 1979*). The area of the coal extraction and its objective is the Upper Pinchen Seam, rich with seams of anthracite.
- 1.11 The overlying soils consist of a mixture of Withnell 1, Gelligaer and Wilcocks 1 associations, which are typical upland soils prone to seasonal water-logging (*Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983*). Localised geology consists of sand and gravels and pink/grey clays, overlain with shallow peat deposits.

Historical & Archaeological Background

- 1.12 In order to inform the watching brief, a desk based assessment was undertaken by the author on behalf of Cambrian Archaeological Projects in 2009 (CAP Report No. 589), from which it was observed that given the richness of the archaeological resource within the assessment area, especially of Bronze Age activity, an archaeological watching brief should be considered as a requirement during any proposed ground works on the site.
- 1.13 No archaeological sites, features or artefacts are recorded in the regional HER database within the bounds of the site. However, due to the archaeological character of the surrounding landscape, there is the high potential for buried archaeological remains becoming exposed.
- 1.14 Within a 2km radius from the centre of the proposed extension, there are 7 Scheduled ancient Monuments (SAM), three of which are Bronze Age Cairn Cemeteries, one Bronze Age burial cairn, two Post Medieval farmsteads and one medieval castle, Penlle'r Castell positioned 1.75km to the west of the proposed development.
- 1.15 There are a further 42 undesignated sites within the Historic Environment Record (HER) located within a 1.5km radius of the site. This number includes several unscheduled Bronze Age burial cairns, post medieval coal mines and associated features, and post medieval settlement sites and sheepfolds.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The watching brief during top soil stripping prior to coal extraction in the area of Cwm yr onen, in the area of Mynydd y Betws, found only one instance where archaeological remains were evident in the form of the recovery of a small fragment of prehistoric flint, identified as a residual flint knapping flake, found lying directly on the surface of the natural clay in an area of shallow covering peat, which may suggest that the flake is a residual flake post-glaciation and as such is Mesolithic in date rather than Neolithic.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to: All those at the Cwm yr Onen Colliery site for their patience during the archaeological work.

7 Bibliography

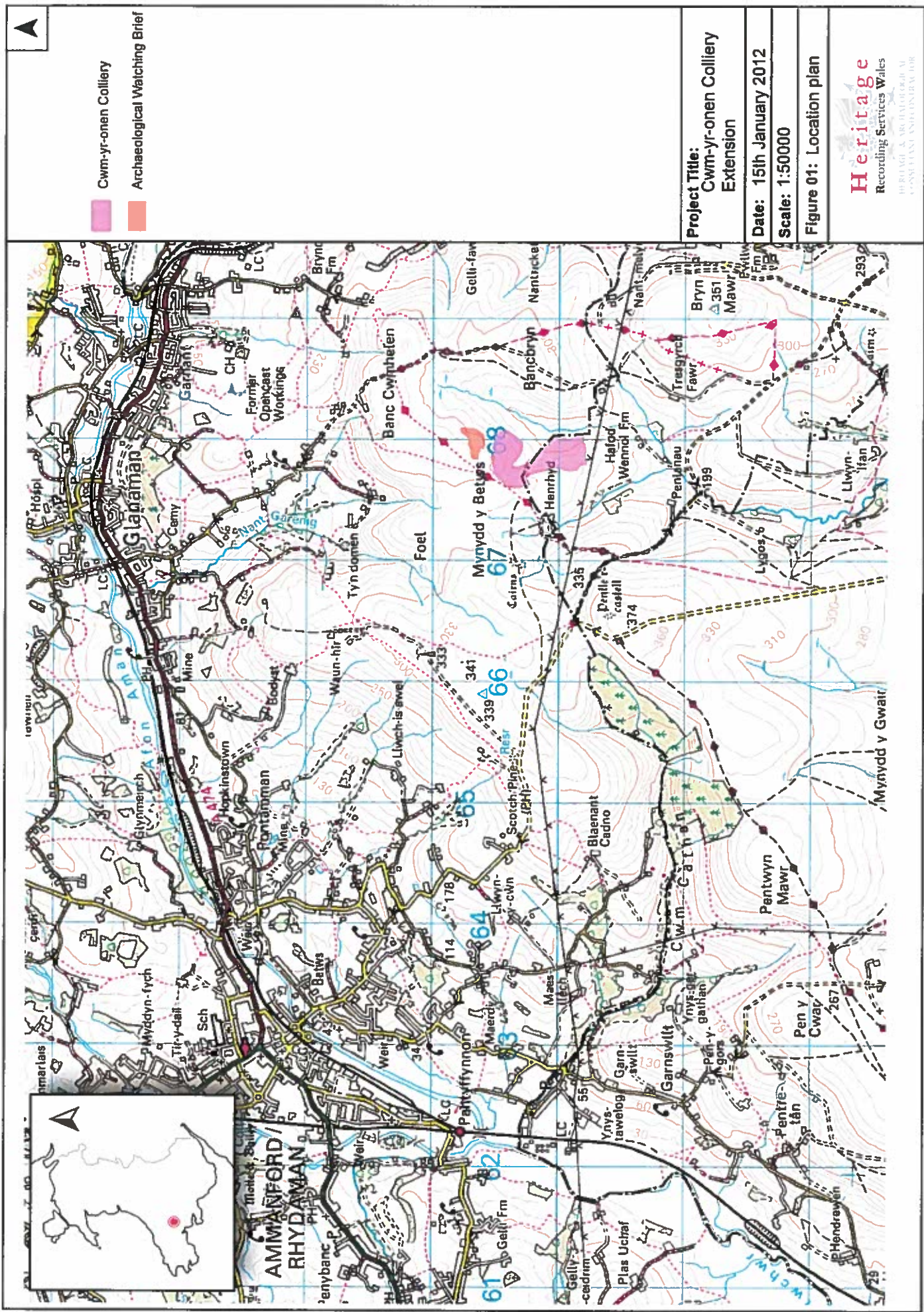
Jones, R.S, 2009. *Cwm-y-onen Colliery Extension, Mynydd Betws, Ammanford - Archaeological Assessment*. CAP Report No.589.

Additional Sources

- *Soil Survey of England and Wales* 1983.
- MAFF - *Guide to Good Practice For Handling Soils* (document April 2000, sheet 1)

APPENDIX I:

Figs & Illustrations



- Cwm-yronen Colliery
- Archaeological Watching Brief

Project Title:	Cwm-yronen Colliery Extension
Date:	15th January 2012
Scale:	1:50000
Figure 01:	Location plan

Cwm-yr-Onen Colliery Final Phase

Scale 1:5000 26th March 2010

- Key**
- Phase 1 Boundary
 - Phase 2 Boundary
 - Final Phase Boundary
 - Coal Area on Basal Seam, depth as indicated in metres
 - Limit of wind turbine lease area in pink, agreed crossing shown hatched red
 - Turbine Location

Mynydd-y-Betws

Area of watching brief

Crossing Point

Henhyd Farm

Project Title:
Cwm-yr-onen Colliery
Extension

Date: 15th January 2012

Scale: 1:5000

Figure 02: Site plan

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HERITAGE AND HISTORICAL
CONSERVATION



- Phase 2 Boundary (completed)
- Extension (watching brief)
- Proposed Mynydd Betws wind turbine



Project Title:	Cwm-yr-onen Colliery Extension
Date:	15th January 2012
Scale:	1:5000
Figure 03:	Aerial photo (2006) of site extension
 Heritage Recording Services Wales <small>HERITAGE & ARCHITECTURAL CONSULTANTS LTD</small>	

A

- Phase 2 Boundary (completed)
- Final phase extension
- Proposed Mynydd Betws wind turbines
- 40-51** Cut numbers

Project Title:
Cwm-yr-onen Colliery
Extension

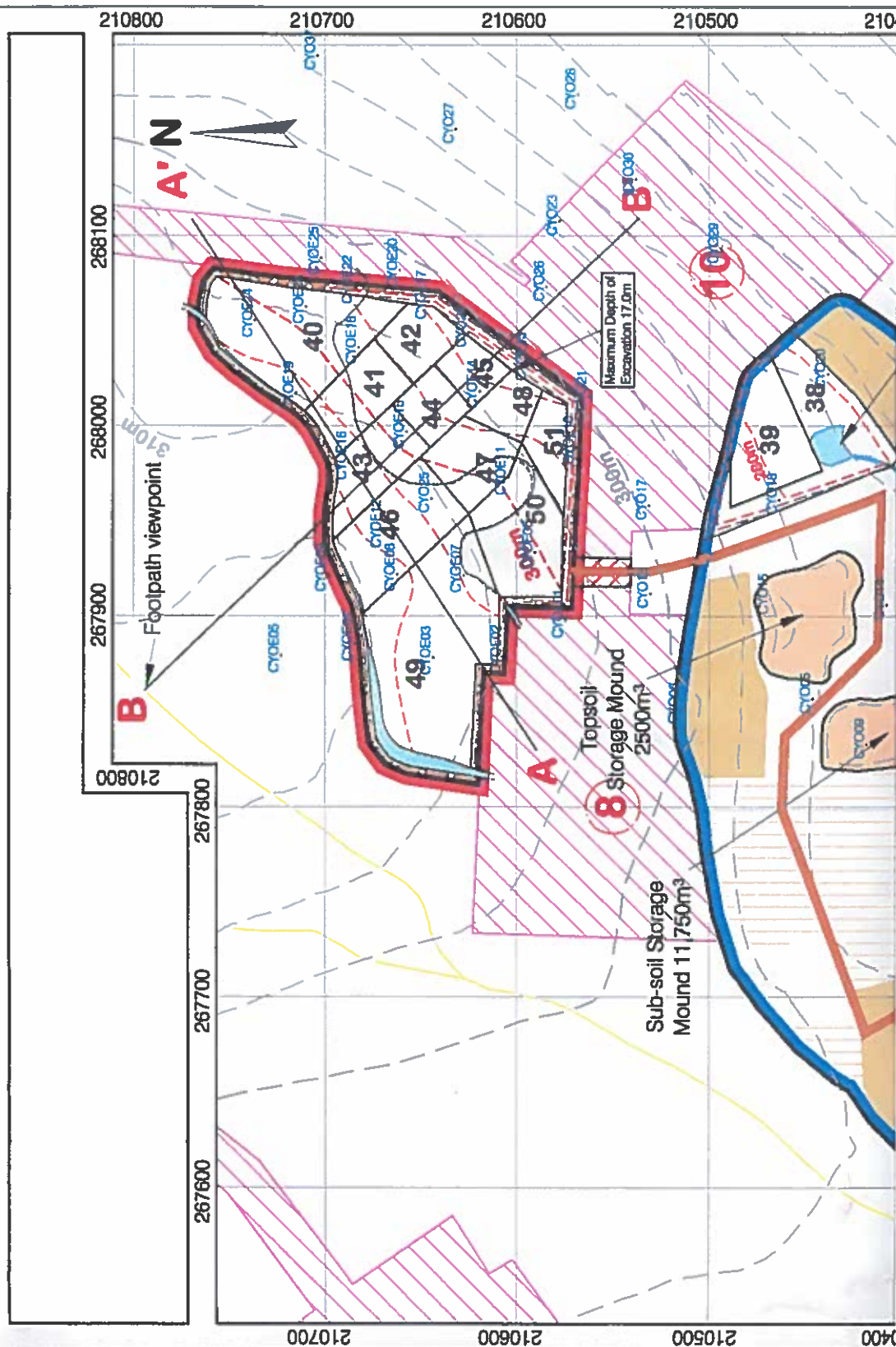
Date: 15th January 2012

Scale: 1:5000

Figure 04:

Site plan showing Cut numbers and position of seam

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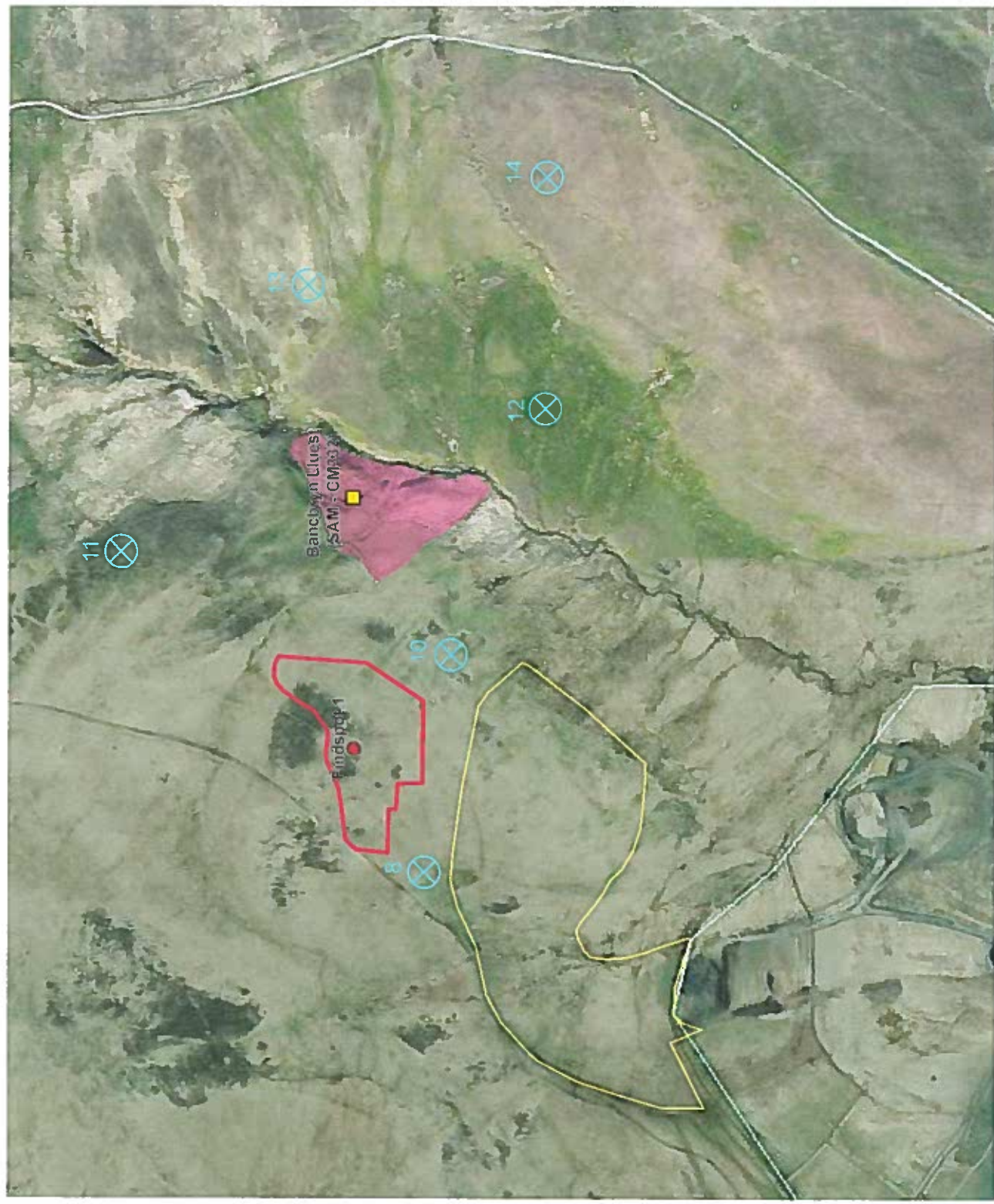
- Phase 1 Boundary (completed)
- Phase 2 Boundary (completed)
- Proposed extension
- Proposed Mynydd Betws wind turbines
- Archaeological findspot
- Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)
- Scheduled area

Project Title:
Cwm-yr-onen Colliery
Extension

Date: 15th January 2012

Scale: 1:5000

Figure 05:
Site plan showing archaeological
sites



APPENDIX II:

Photo plates



Plate 1. Working shot during top soil stripping at access point to extension area. Looking north.



Plate 2. Completed area of top soil strip at extension access point. Looking south.



Plate 3. Working shot of top soil strip in extension area. Looking north.



Plate 4. Stripped area of top soil. Looking southeast.

Photo Plate No's. 1-4

Taken by Richard Scott Jones

Project Title Cwm yr Onen Colliery

Date 10th April 2012

Notes

Scale



Plate 5. View of potential archaeological feature exposed following top soil strip. Looking south.



Plate 6. Detail shot of possible archaeological feature. Interpreted as geological. Looking south.



Plate 7. Detail shot of possible archaeological feature. Likely geological. Looking north.

Project Title Cwm yr Onen Colliery

Date 10th April 2012

Scale

Taken by Richard Scott Jones

Notes

Photo Plate No's. 5-7

APPENDIX III:
Archive Cover Sheet

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Cwm yr Onen Colliery,
Mynydd-y-Betws, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire

ARCHIVE DESTINATION – RCHAMW

Site Name:	Cwm yr Onen Colliery, Mynydd-y-Betws
Site Code:	CYO/WB/2012
PRN:	
NPRN :	N/A
SAM:	N/A
Other Ref No:	HRSW Report No. 128
NGR:	SN 6785 1060
Site Type:	None
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Manager:	Richard Scott Jones
Project Dates:	January 2011 – January 2012
Categories Present:	N/A
Location of Original Archive:	HRSW
Location of duplicate Archives:	Dyfed Archaeological Trust
Number of Finds Boxes:	None
Location of Finds:	None
Museum Reference:	
Copyright:	HRSWales
Restrictions to access:	None