

Archaeological Watching Brief

at

Pen y Graig, Abergwili,
Carmarthenshire, SA32 7ER



September 2011



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Pen y Graig, Abergwili
Carmarthenshire, SA32 7ER

for

Mr Andrew William Thomas

To meet a condition of Carmarthen County Council
Planning Application W/25027 24th.June 2011

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2 Summary

The area excavated is a very wet meadow which has only been shallow ploughed once in living memory. With few finds, it would appear that there is little evidence for any archaeological interest.

3 Introduction

3.1 Location

SN449218 Caer Pistyll Pen y Graig

Pen y Graig Farm is situated 80metres above sea level on the lower north-western slopes of Merlins Hill, and 1 mile northeast of the village of Abergwili.

The 7 acre field (Caer Pistyll) is located Immediately south of Pen y Graig farmhouse and its adjoining out buildings.

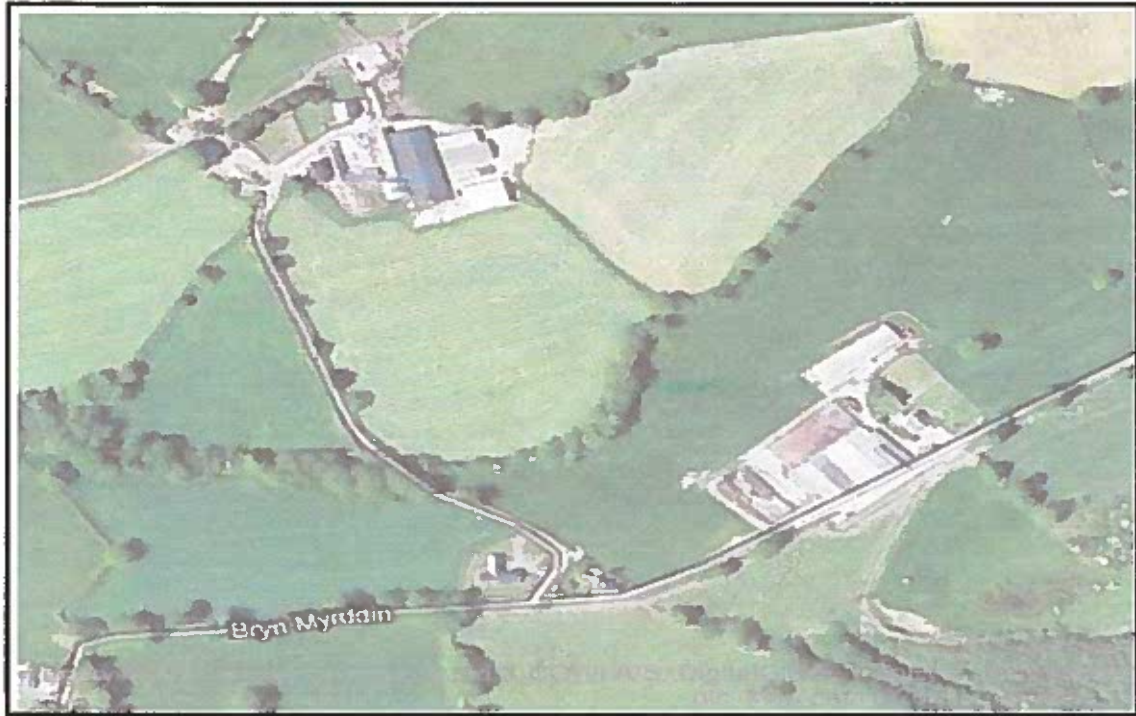


Figure 1 Pen y Graig courtesy of Google Maps

3.2 History

Pen y Graig is a 225 acre dairy farm. The present farm dating from 1880, with modern 20th.cent cowsheds and milking parlour; however parts of the house originate to the 15th.cent.

4 Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological watching brief is 'to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or potentially disruptive works'

The primary objective of this watching brief at Pen y Graig was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological features, deposits and artefacts exposed during the ground disturbance works were adequately recorded, interpreted and reported.

5 Methodology

5.1 Methods and techniques

The excavation was carried out by machine with a 2 metre toothless bucket.

The watching and recording of the excavation and the sifting of the spoil for finds was undertaken by an archaeologist. Where necessary limited hand excavation by trowel was undertaken to further investigate those features and finds that were encountered.

5.2 Recording

The recording of the trench was done in three formats:

1. Photographs were taken in colour format.
2. Hand sketches were made on site along with measurements
3. Daily records and reports were produced and stored as computer word processor files

5.3 Health and Safety

All works were carried out to the requirements of current Health and Safety regulations.

5.4 Archaeological Standards

All work was undertaken in accordance with The Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs⁰.

5.5 Environmental Sampling

An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it.

6 The Watching Brief

6.1 Work required:

Church and Site Archaeological Services were commissioned to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief during the building of an extensive new cattle accommodation, milking parlour, underground slurry store and associated access tracks. This required the stripping of turf and topsoil over an area of 13,000 square metres (130m long x 100m wide). Within this area a deep excavation 85m x 40m required three exploratory test pits 1.5m square in order to establish the depth of the natural geology.

7 The Excavation

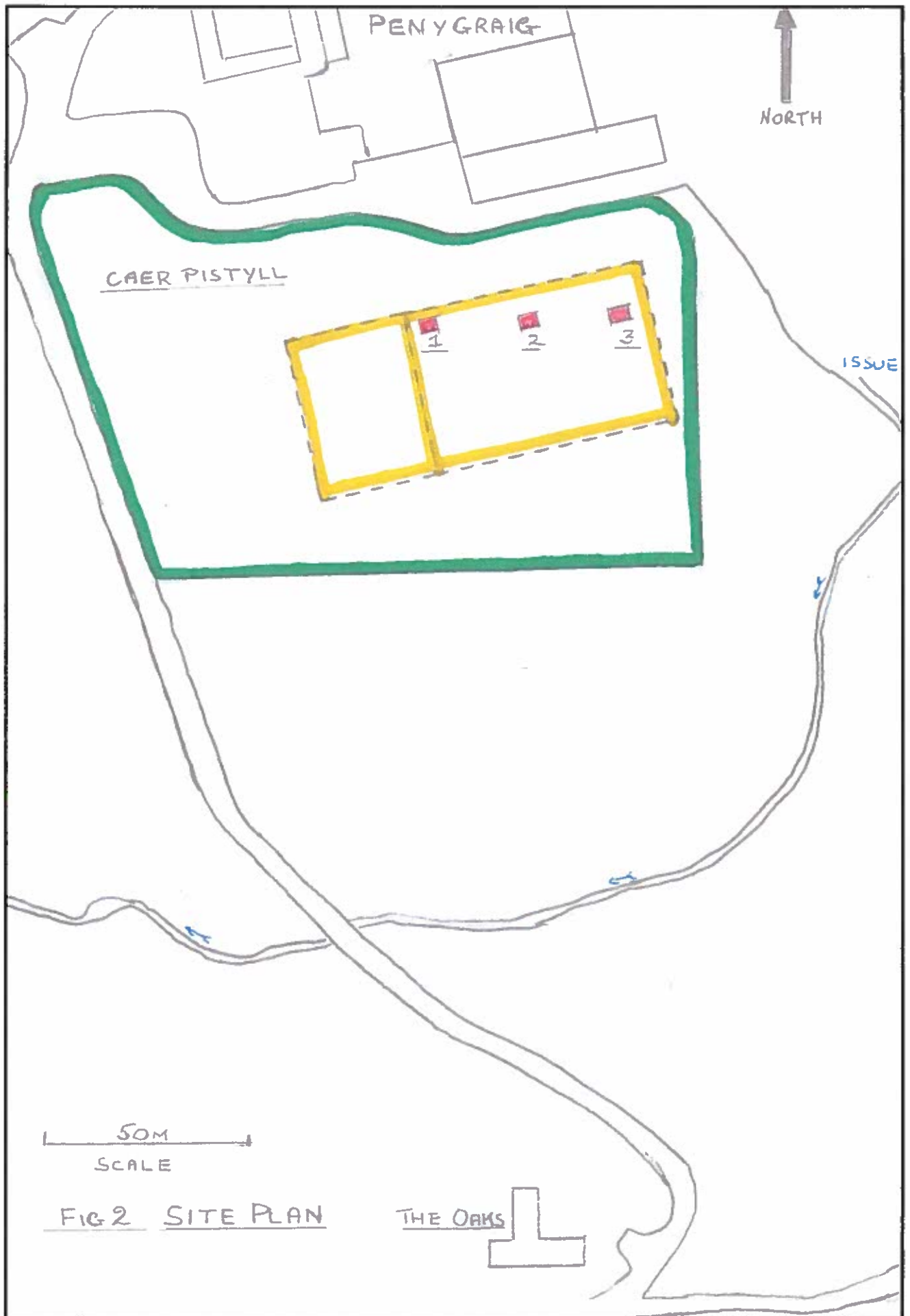
7.1 Overall site (fig.2 outlined in green)(fig.3)

The whole site was stripped of turf and topsoil to a depth of 150mm (context 001).The whole area was extremely wet and showed no evidence of ploughing. There were very few pottery artefacts and no metal or bone finds. The few finds were very scattered and showed no concentrations in any areas.

7.2 Deep excavation (fig.2 outlined in yellow)

This area was to be excavated to a depth of several metres so three test pits (fig.2 marked in red) (figs.4,5,6,) were excavated to determine the horizon of the natural geology (contexts 002 to 006 incl). There was no evidence of any archaeological disturbance.

As a result it would appear that there is no evidence of any archaeological interest.



8 Photographs



Fig 3 Stripped site looking southeast.



Fig 4 Test pit 1 looking north. One metre and two metre scales.



Fig 5 Test pit 2 looking north. One metre and two metre scales.



Fig 6 Test pit 3 looking north. One metre and two metre scales

9 Contexts

- 001. Turf with dark top soil containing very random sherds of pottery.
- 002. Brown clay/subsoil, overlaid with random small flat stones.
- 003. Dark brown clay/subsoil, overlaid with random rounded stones.
- 004. Orange boulder clay with random rounded stones.
- 005. Blue flecked orange boulder clay.
- 006. Thin lens of flat rounded stones.

10 Finds

10.1 Overall site

Ceramics

- 3 small sherds , Roman Severn Valley ware.
- 3 sherds, 17th cent. North Devon gravel tempered ware.
- 1 fragment, pot lid of 17th cent. North Devon gravel tempered ware.
- 3 pieces, Keiller stoneware jars.
- 1 piece, stoneware bottle.
- 1 fragment, rim of 19th cent. matt black glazed pancheon.
- 1 piece, base of 19th cent internally salt glazed pancheon.
- 2 fragments, blue transfer cream ware teapot/jug handle.
- 2 pieces, blue transfer tea cup.
- 13 fragments, 19th/early 20th cent. blue transfer plates.
- 24 fragments, 19th early 20th cent creamware plates.
- 1 piece, clay pipe stem.

Glass

- 2 pieces, dark green bottle necks.
- 1 piece, clear bottle.
- 1 piece, Victorian simply decorated moulded glass.

Building material

- 2 pieces, roof slate.

10.2 Test pits 1 2 & 3

No finds

11 Deposition of Report and Finds

Copies of this report have been deposited with:

- 8.1 Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Heritage Environment Record.
- 8.2 Carmarthenshire County Council Planning Department.
- 8.3 Mr Andrew William Thomas, Pen y Graig, Abergwili, Carmar.
- 8.4 Church and Site Archaeology, 9 Lilac Drive Monmouth.
- 8.5 The finds have been retained by Church and Site Archaeology Services.

12 References and Bibliography

- 10.1 Institute for Field Archaeologists – Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief, Pub Oct 1994, Revised Sep 2001
- 10.2 Institute for Field Archaeologists – Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Excavation, Pub Sept 1995, Revised Sep 2001
- 10.3 UK Institute of Conservation's 'Guidelines for the treatment of Finds from Archaeological Sites'.
- 10.4 The Institute for Field Archaeologists: Guidelines for Finds Work'.
- 10.5 Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

13 Acknowledgements

- 11.1 To the contractor Dai Morgan of Twyn Farm of Nantgaredig, Carmarthen SA32 7NN, for his help on site.
- 11.2 To Andrew Thomas for his help and forbearance.
- 11.3 To Heather James for her help in pottery identification.

14 Drawings

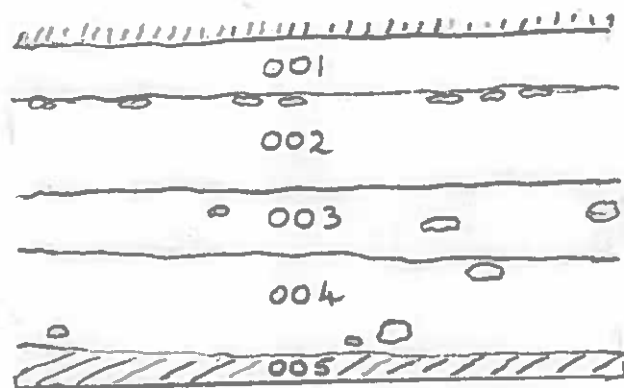


FIG 4 TEST PIT 1

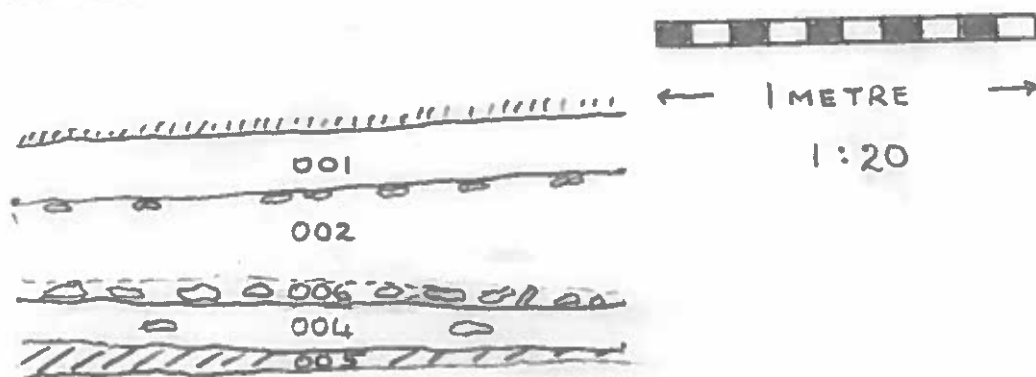


FIG 5 TEST PIT 2

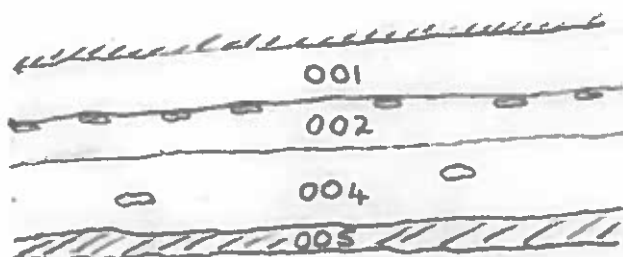


FIG 6 TEST PIT 3