

**CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.**

# Rhosygilwen, St. David's



**Archaeological Evaluation**



By  
**Kevin Trott, BA (Hons)**



**CAP Report No. 263**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**Rhosygilwen, St. Davids  
Pembrokeshire**

**BY *Kevin Trott BA (Hons)***

Prepared for:  
**Mike Mathews  
Price & Sons Surveyors  
1 High Street  
St. Davids**

**CAP Report No: 263**

**Date: July 2003**



**Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd  
Old Chapel  
Llanidloes  
Powys  
SY18 6JR**

**Telephone: 01686 413857 / Fax: 01686 411280  
e-mail: [Info@cambrian-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:Info@cambrian-archaeology.co.uk)**

## CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Location and scope of work .....	1
Geology and topography .....	1
Archaeological and historical background .....	2
Aims and Objectives .....	2
Desk-based assessment .....	2
Field Evaluation .....	2
Evaluation Methodology .....	2
Scope of Fieldwork.....	2
Finds.....	3
Palaeo-environmental evidence.....	3
Presentation of results.....	3
The Desk-Based Assessment.....	3
Prehistoric.....	3
Early Medieval.....	3
Medieval .....	3
Medieval and Post-medieval.....	3
Cartographic Evidence.....	4
Photographic Evidence .....	4
Evaluation Results.....	4
Soils and ground conditions .....	4
Distribution of deposits.....	4
Descriptions .....	5
Finds.....	6
Pottery.....	6
Discussion And Interpretation.....	6
Reliability of field investigation.....	6
Overall interpretation.....	6
Significance.....	7
Acknowledgements .....	7
Bibliography and references.....	7



## List of Figures

Figure 1	Rhosygilwen, location plan
Figure 2	Trench location plan
Figure 3	Trench sections
Figure 4	Burial plans and sections
Figure 5	1837 St. Davids Parish Tythe Map
Figure 6	1887 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map
Figure 7	1906 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition OS Map
Figure 8	SMR Details

## List of Plates

Plate 1	Excavated Trench Looking East
Plate 2	Excavated Trench Looking West
Plate 3	Grave 17 & 23 looking north
Plate 4	Grave 14 looking south west
Plate 5	Grave 11 under excavation looking east
Plate 6	Grave 11 looking north east

### Copyright Notice:

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. retain copyright of this report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, and have granted a licence to **Price & Sons Surveyors** to Use and reproduce the material contained within.

The Ordnance Survey has granted Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd a Copyright Licence (No. AL 52163A0001) to reproduce map information; Copyright remains otherwise with the Ordnance Survey.

## **Non Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) for Price & Sons Surveyors, St. Davids on behalf of their client at Rhosygilwen, St. Davids. The report draws upon two investigative elements, a desk-based assessment and a field evaluation.*

*The desk-based assessment appraised the documentary, photographic and cartographic evidence pertaining to the site and its immediate environs. The possibility of archaeological remains relating to a burial site of Prehistoric/Early Medieval date was highlighted*

*The field evaluation examined the site for the presence of burials and located four graves that were lined and capped with slate and stone.*

## **Introduction**

### **Location and scope of work**

In July 2003 Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) carried out a pre-determinate archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site on land adjacent to Rhosygilwen, St. Davids (Fig 1) for Price & Sons Surveyors of St. Davids, Pembrokeshire on behalf of their client Mr. Symonds, the landowner.

This was in respect of a planning application for development (NP/03/149) and a brief (ACA 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2003) set by, and an archaeological specification agreed with, Lucy-Rowley Williams of Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

The development concerns the construction of an additional domestic rooms and an attached garage on the site situated at NGR SM 7750 2920.

### **Geology and topography**

Rhosygilwen lies 3km to the north east of St. Davids along a lane that links the hamlet of Llanrhian to St. Davids. The site of the proposed development is located to the east of Rhosygilwen house that is situated to the north west of Treferfyn (Fig 2). The site is currently open wasteland that has been used as a hard standing area for vehicles. The proposed development footprint covers an area of 12m by 6.5m. A lane bound the land, which slopes gently away to the south and south east, to the south and to the east and north by fields, the house is situated to the west.

The underlying solid geology of Rhosygilwen comprises Llanvirn and Arenig of Ordovician Age. The deposits in the locality of the development site belong to the Granite and Acid Igneous rocks with well-drained humose gritty loamy soils, occasionally with thin iron-pan and boulders or rocks visible on the surface.

## **Archaeological and historical background**

The Regional Sites and Monuments Record demonstrated that the proposed development area lay within an area of high archaeological potential. The site lies on a known Prehistoric and Early medieval burial ground that according to archaeological and historical records has seen no development.

The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a desk-based assessment (DBA) set out below. The site itself has produced archaeological evidence in the form of stone coffins and human bones, although a chambered tomb of Prehistoric date lies immediately to the north.

## **Aims and Objectives**

### **Desk-based assessment**

To collate and assess relevant information held in the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (including the results of previous archaeological investigations).

To collate and assess all cartographic information relevant to the area.

To assess the topography and land use of the area through maps and site visits.

### **Field Evaluation**

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area paying particular attention to any burial activity.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.

To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features

To appraise the likely impact of the proposal on any surviving archaeological deposits and if appropriate to make suggestions for a mitigation strategy or, where areas contain archaeology of national importance, for preservation *in situ*.

## **Evaluation Methodology**

### **Scope of Fieldwork**

The evaluation consisted of a single machine-excavated trench (Fig 2) that was 1.70 m in width and 12m in length. A mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket removed the overburden under close archaeological supervision.

Site director Kevin Trott and project assistant Andrew Peterson undertook the evaluation under the overall direction of Kevin Blockley (MIFA). The trench was cleaned by hand and sample

sections were recorded and drawn at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50. All trenches were photographed using colour slide, black and white print film and digital photography.

All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation* and current Health and Safety legislation.

### **Finds**

A single sherd of pottery was recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and samples of the stonework from the lintel graves were retained.

### **Palaeo-environmental evidence**

No deposits suited to environmental sampling were located during the evaluation.

### **Presentation of results**

The presentation outlines the results from the trench. Note that all temporary OD levels (85m taken from the south east corner of the present house) are included in the figures.

## **The Desk-Based Assessment**

(See Figure 8 for details)

### **Prehistoric**

#### **Chambered Tomb** (PRN: 2699)

A Neolithic monolith associated with a probable chambered tomb is situated to the north west of the development site at SM 7730 2927.

### **Early Medieval**

#### **Rhosygilwen** (PRN: 2701)

Religious ritual and funerary site/cemetery. Artefacts recorded from the site include long lintel graves and inhumations found at SM 7757 2924.

### **Medieval**

#### **Tre-Prior** (PRN: 2700)

Monastic land based on recorded sources located at (SM 7761 2911).

#### **Yspytty** (PRN: 7914)

Site of Medieval Hospital associated with a religious and funerary site (SM 7740 2895).

## **Medieval & Post-medieval**

### Waun-Y-Beddau (PRN: 14051)

Location of common land situated around SM 778 293.

### Pen-Berry (PRN: 2697)

The site of an enclosure of unknown date located at SM 7728 2922.

## **Cartographic Evidence**

### Tithe Map 1837 (Fig 5)

The assessment area is clearly shown on the 1837 St. Davids Parish Tithe Map. This map was assigned no apportionment number for the assessment area. It is shown as open land with dwellings to the east of the site along the present lane and Penberry farm to the north west.

### 1887 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map (Fig 6)

This map shows that Rhosygilwen had been surrounded with rectangular and square fields. To the north east of the site there is a record for the location for a burial ground and the lane is recorded as Roman Road. This map displays noticeable changes in relation to the 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure acts.

### 1906 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map (Fig 7)

This map indicates there has been no change in the land-use of the assessment area.

## **Photographic Evidence**

Air photographs plotted in 1946 and subsequently updated revealed no new evidence of any archaeological features. The only recorded visible features related to PRN: 2699 and 2697 (RAF, 1946 106G-UK-1625 1008-9). The dwellings and field boundaries remains as recorded in the 1906 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map.

## **Evaluation Results**

### **Soils and ground conditions**

The site and weather conditions were good with dry hot sunny conditions that lasted throughout the machining and excavation of the trenches.

### **Distribution of deposits**

The hard surface deposit was consistently present in the trench although the thickness did vary slightly. The underlying geology was brownish yellow sandy clay.



## Descriptions

### *Trench 1* (Figs 2, 3 & 4) (Plates ?)

The overburden (0.20 – 0.30m in depth) was removed (1) revealing a deposit dark brown sandy clay (6) at the eastern end of the trench a modern sewer pipe was encountered (2) with its related backfill (3). This extended within the trench southwestwards for approximately 3.5 m and cut through deposits (1, 6) and (7). A water pipe trench was also recorded aligned north south, this service cut (4), cut through layers (6) and (7), the pipe trench was filled with pea-shingle (5). In the western portion of the trench abutting the modern concrete path a brick manhole was revealed, this feature (9) was back-filled with brick rubble (10).

A dark brown sandy-clay deposit (6) was encountered across the excavated trench. The thickness and consistency of this deposit varied suggesting it could represent a cultivated soil that was recorded in 1925 by Mr. Devonald of Rhosygilwen Farm. This deposit overlay in the southern portion of the trench a thin deposit of dark brown sandy soil (7), that in turn sealed the natural sand (8).

Cut into deposit (7) four rectangular grave cuts aligned south-east/north-west were recorded. Grave cut (11) contained a medium brown sandy-clay (12) that sealed a Porthgallen limestone lintel grave (13). A small section was hand excavated in the northern portion of this grave to clarify the survival of the inhumation burial. A dark brown sandy clay (21) overlay a dark grey sticky clay (22) that contained decayed bone fragments. The surviving depth of soil contained under the lintel stone capped grave was 0.15m by 0.50m in width. The exposed length of the grave measured 1.20m.

Lintel grave (14) was situated to the west of (13); this grave was lined with Abereddy slate (16) and measured 0.90m in length and 0.35m in width. The southern portion of this grave was hand excavated and produced no human bone, within a medium brown sandy soil (15). The base of this lintel grave was lined in shattered fragments of slate, no capping stone survived.

Lintel grave (17) was situated 0.90m to the west of grave (14). The exposed grave area measured 2.20m in length by 1.30m in width; it was capped with Abereddy slate and lined with Portgallen limestone (19). A section was hand excavated in the northern part of the grave and exposed a probable male skull (20) that looked or rolled north-eastwards (the depth of the skull under the collapsed capping stones measured 0.17m), it was contained in a dark brown sandy clay (18).

Lintel grave (17) cut through possible rubble limestone lined grave (23). This feature was surrounded on the northern lip-edge with a single layer of Portgallen limestone rubble, during excavation through this feature a single light brown sandy clay was encountered that contained fragmented slate and a single pot sherd, no human bone was encountered. The grave measured 2.40m in length by 0.46m in width and 0.20m in depth.

The final feature encountered was situated in the northwestern end of the excavated trench and consisted of the southeastern corner of a rectangular cut (25) that contained a dark brown sandy-clay. This feature was not examined and remains undated.

## **Finds**

A single sherd of pottery was recovered from the excavated trench. The lintel graves contained human bone that was left *in-situ* no further finds were recovered.

### **Pottery**

A single sherd of pottery was recovered from the base of deposit (24) within grave (23). This sherd has been sent to a specialist for further dating.

## **Discussion and Interpretation**

### **Reliability of field investigation**

The evaluation was unhampered by any modern building or agricultural activity. A network of modern services consisting of sewage and water were encountered within trench alignment. The trench was positioned to encounter the nearby electric cable, the truncation and impact of the services to the site were minimal.

The overall findings of the evaluation were consistent with the reports of archaeological activity suggested by the cartographic evidence and SMR records. The known land use of the site had been unchanged prior to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure act when the common land was divided into fields. The possible presence of Early-medieval activity indicated by the historical record was clarified within the footprint of the evaluation trench.

### **Overall interpretation**

The evaluation revealed the survival of early-medieval lintel graves that cut a buried deposit of soil. No later archaeological remains were encountered and only slight modern activity consisting of services was encountered. The three graves were all aligned southeast to northwest and constructed of local stone/slate material, the fourth grave consisted of limestone rubble and may relate to an earlier phase of burial activity. The graves were usually covered with a relatively shallow layer of soil that was evident above grave (11). Mounds did not cover the graves, and most of the soil dug from them must have been removed. The lack of side walls in graves (11) and (23) suggest they could have built of both timber and stone. The later ploughing activity over the graves had precluded us understanding if there was a system of grave marking. The stone rubble surrounding (23) could have acted as stone kerbs that were laid flush with the original ground surface. The two graves were capped with stone lintels (11) and (17), had slumped below the surface of the grave cuts, as the grave timbers decayed.



## **APPENDIX I:**

## **Archive Cover Sheet**

## ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

### Rhosygilwen

Site Name:	Waun Y Beddau; Carreg Nimllwyd
Site Code:	N/A
PRN:	2701
NPRN :	N/A
SAM:	N/A
Other Ref No:	N/A
NGR:	SM 7750 2920
Site Type:	Early Medieval
Project Type:	Evaluation
Project Officer:	Kevin Trott
Project Dates:	July 2003
Categories Present:	N/A
Location of Original Archive:	Scolton House Museum
Location of duplicate Archives:	CAP Ltd
Number of Finds Boxes:	One
Location of Finds:	Scolton House Museum
Museum Reference:	Not Assigned
Copyright:	CAP Ltd
Restrictions to access:	None



Fig 01: Location Plan

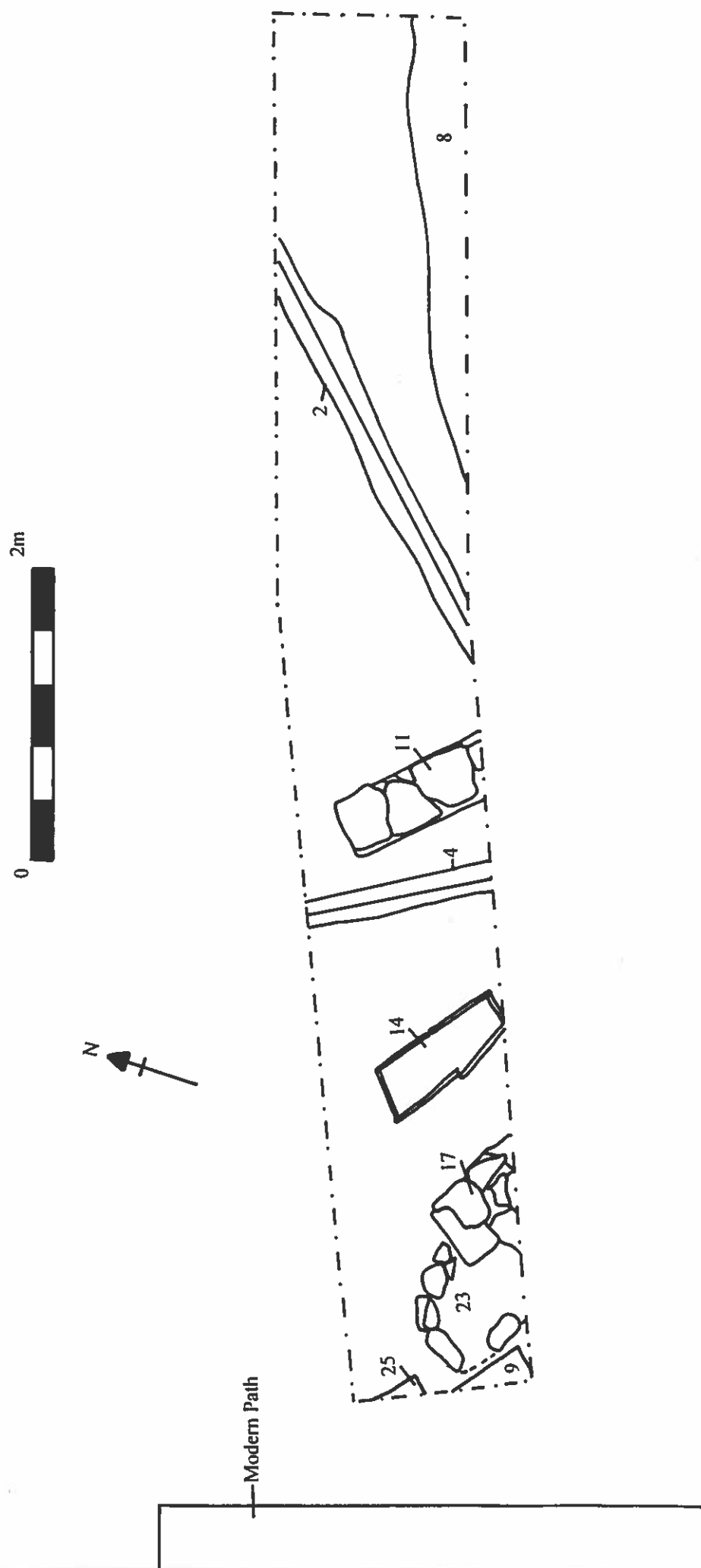


Figure 2 Trench plan with all features



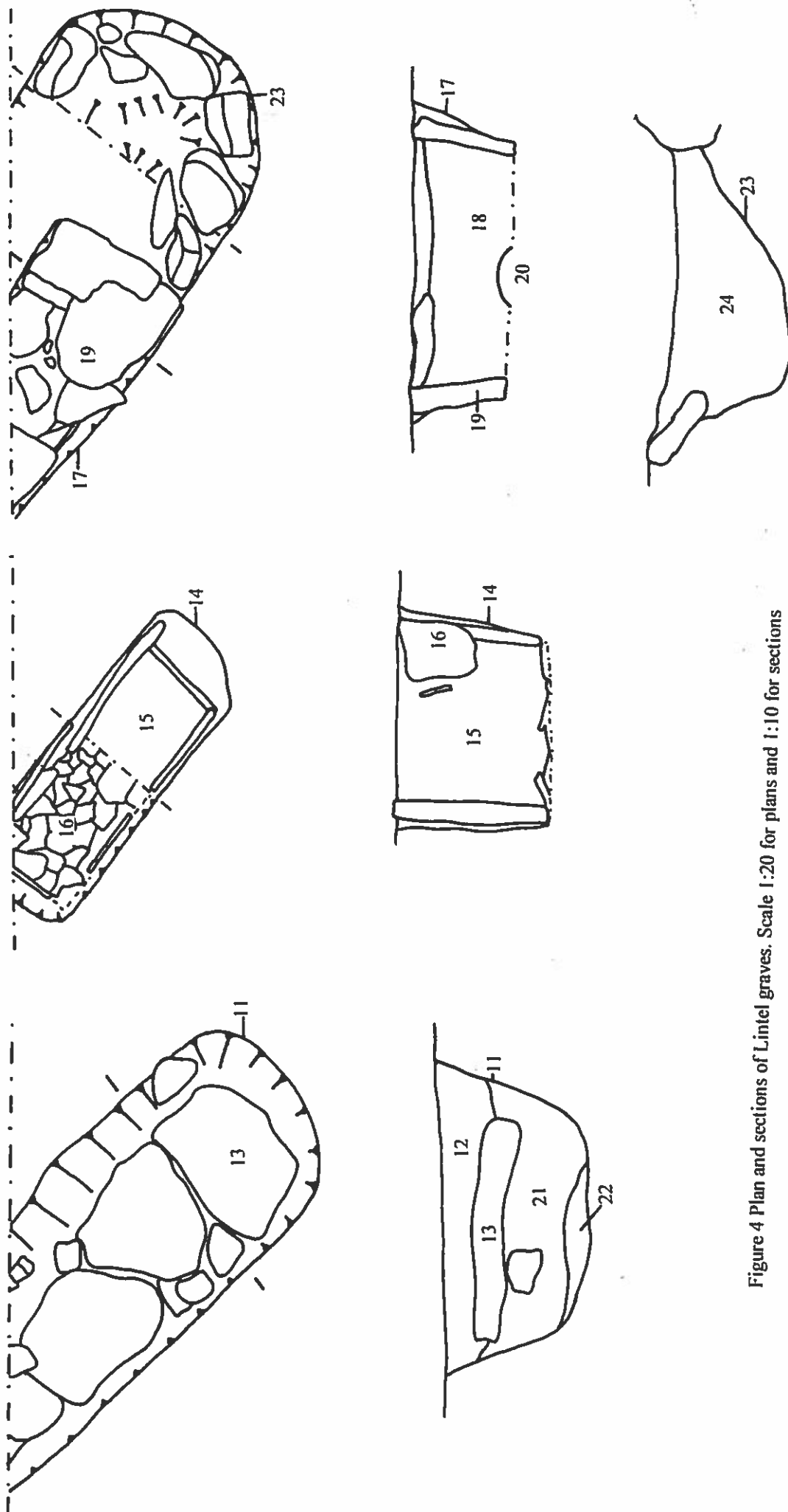
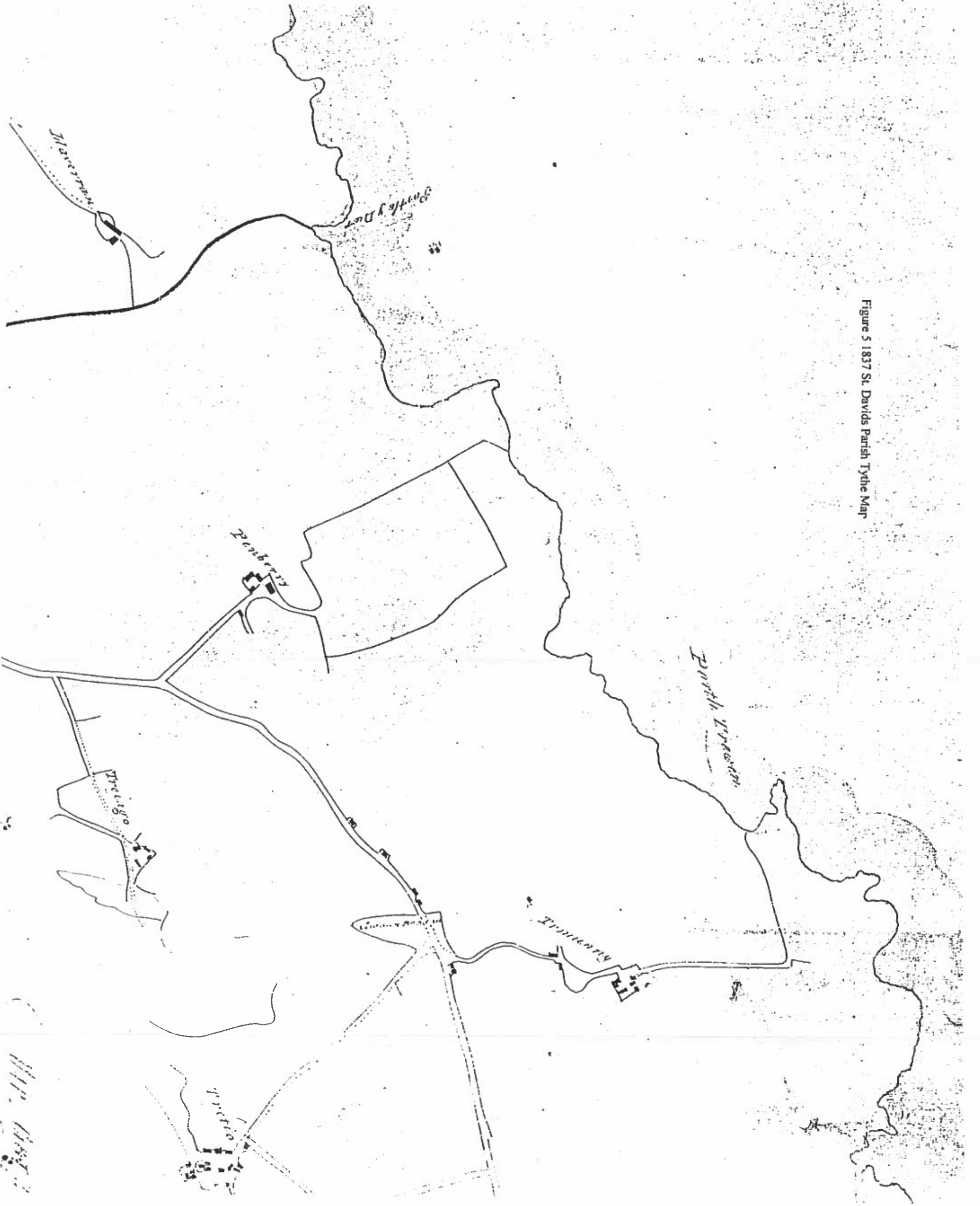


Figure 4 Plan and sections of Lintel graves. Scale 1:20 for plans and 1:10 for sections

Figure 5 1837 St. Davids Parish Tythe Map

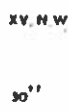




LOH 5° 14' W

*L l e e*

LAT 51° 58'

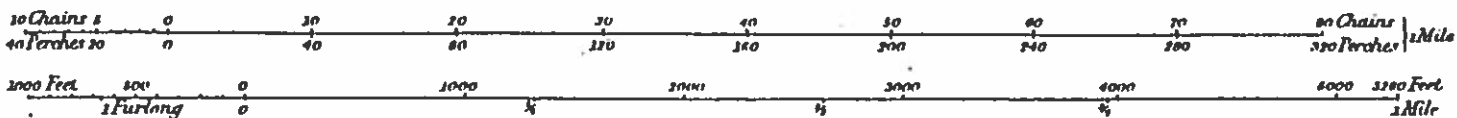


LAT. 51° 5'

**ST. DAVID'S PR.**

LON. 3° 14' W.

Scale—Six Inches to One Statute Mile or 880 Feet to One Inch.—1850



Price 1/6 net.

Figure 7 1906 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS Map

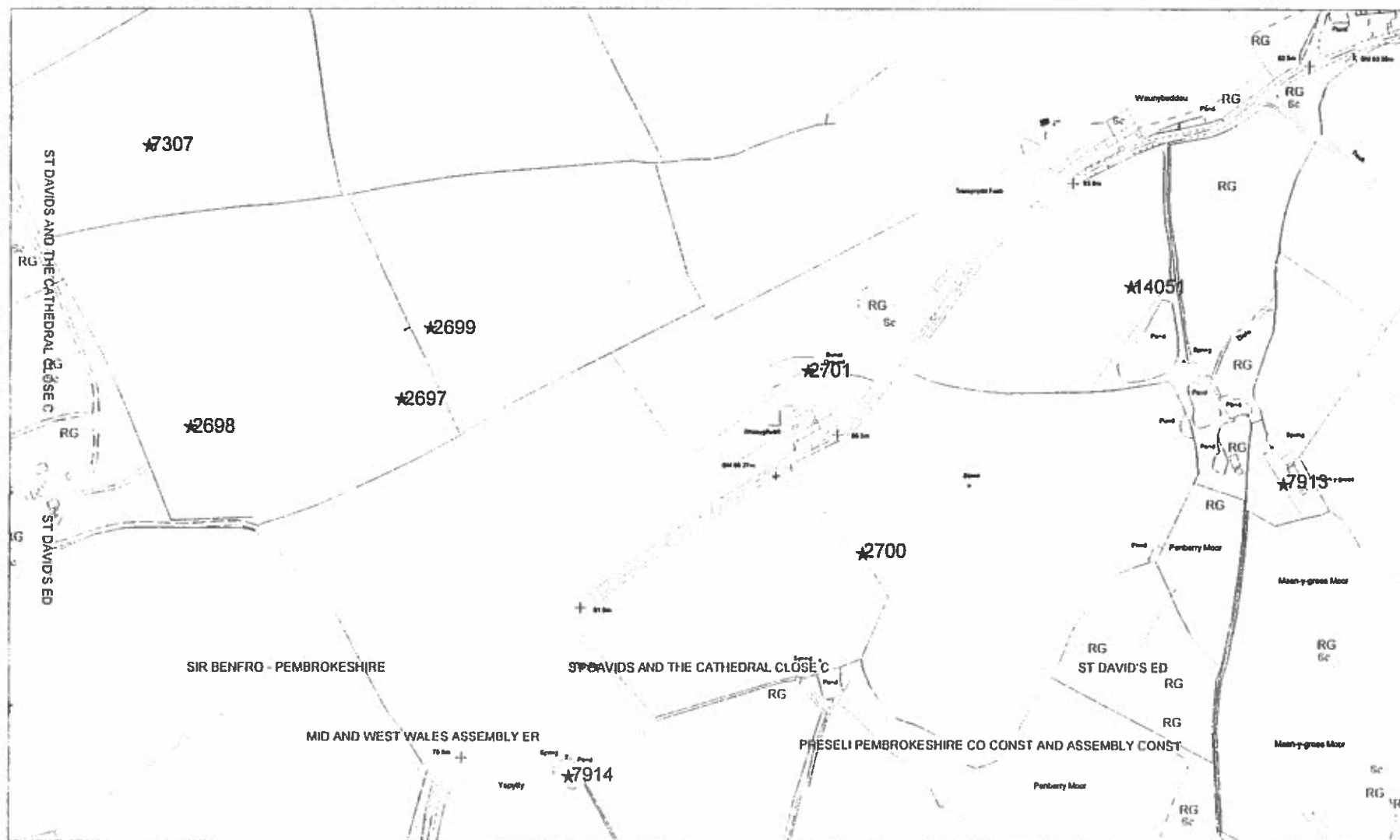
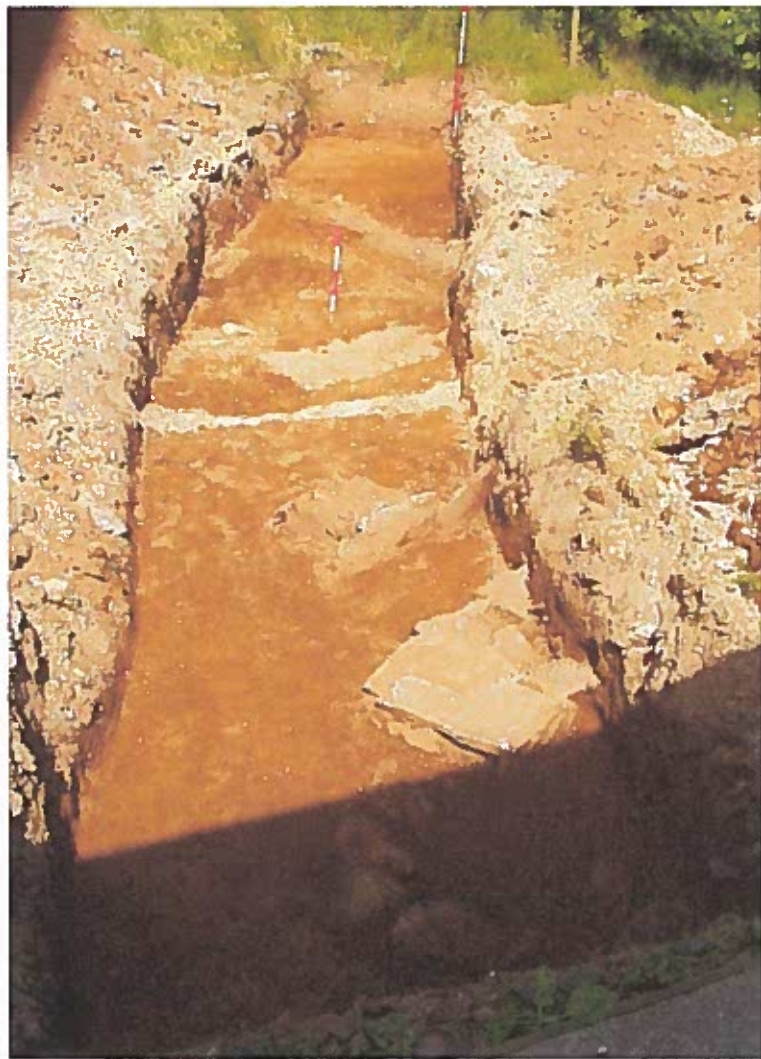


Figure 8 SMR Data (supplied by Dyfed Archaeological Trust)





**Plate 01: Trench Location looking east**



**Plate 02: Trench Location looking west**





**Plate 03: Graves 17 & 23 looking north**



**Plate 04: Grave 14 looking south west**



**Plate 05: Grave 11 under excavation looking east**



**Plate 06: Grave 11 looking north east**