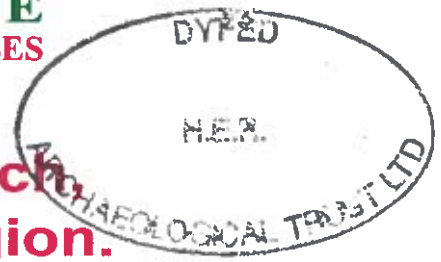
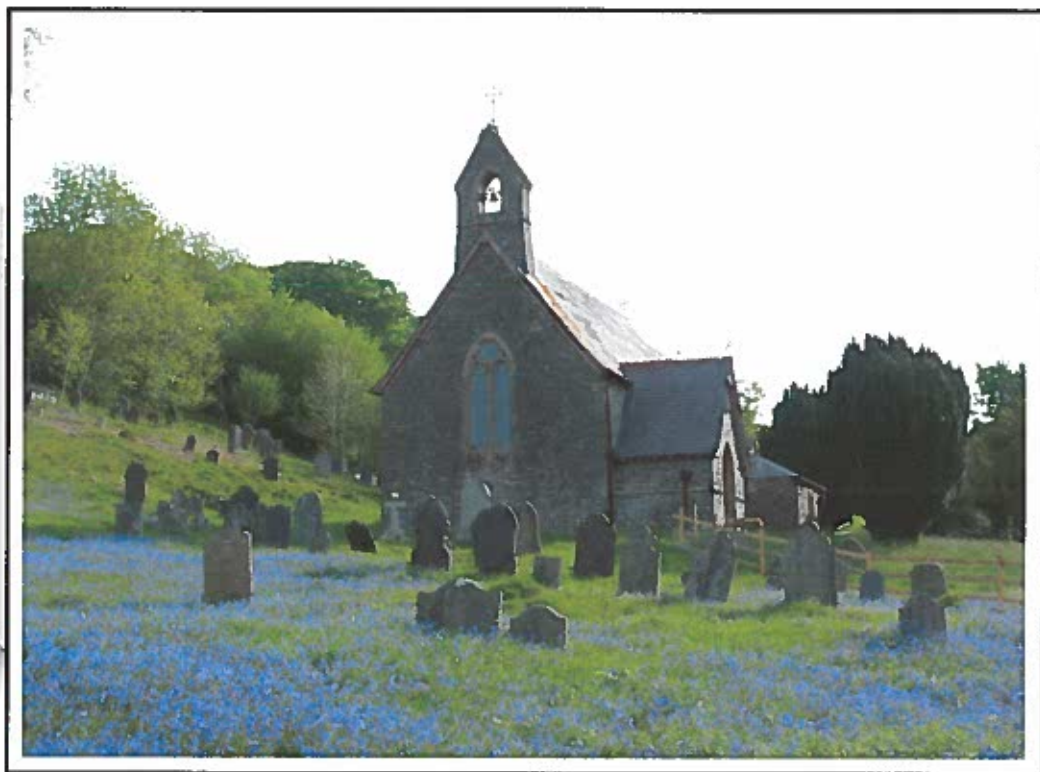


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RECORDING SERVICES **WALES**



## **Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion.**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief**



*By*  
*Richard Scott Jones (BA Hons, MA, MIFA)*



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

## **Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion.**

By  
Richard Scott Jones (*BA Hons, MA, MIFA*)

*Prepared for:*

Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
Shire Hall  
8 Carmarthen Street  
Llandeilo  
Carmarthenshire.

*On behalf of:*

Archi Spech  
Chapel Street  
Llanarth.

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Pen-y-Fan, 11 Forest Lane, Llangybi, Ceredigion, SA48 8LZ

Tel: 01570 493312 Fax: 08712 428171 E-mail: [hrrswales@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:hrrswales@tiscali.co.uk)

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## Non Technical Summary

*The following report is the result of archaeological work undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales for ArchiSpec on behalf of Nevil Topham, owner of Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion, as part of a condition for an archaeological watching brief during ground work for the conversion of the church and parts of the existing graveyard into a residential dwelling.*

*The watching brief was designed to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.*

*The watching brief exposed several interesting features and deposits. During the ground work for the landscaping of the proposed car parking area and the service trenches a large stone slab became exposed alongside what has now been established as being the position of the former holy spring or well on the site, positioned at the threshold between the church enclosure and the access track. This spring appears to have fallen into disuse and the well's original position and purpose forgotten at some stage in the church and churchyard's life. The exposed stone slab appeared to have been positioned in such a way, as being for the purpose of kneeling before the well to collect water likely for healing reasons.*

*During the floor reduction inside the church in the Chancel area for the insertion of underfloor heating, the groundwork exposed a significant amount of disarticulated human remains and the positions of two previously unknown burials, one very disturbed and partially disarticulated and the other undisturbed and only exposed to the point of the covering stones. This latter burial appears to have been laid in a west to east orientation, implying that the burial is likely that of a former vicar or preacher of Nant Cwnlle Church, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century in date. This burial was left in place thus preserved in situ below the newly inserted floor. Regarding all disarticulated remains, following guidelines from the Ministry of Justice, these were all reburied on the site within an agreed area within the churchyard.*

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following report is the result of archaeological work undertaken by Heritage Recording Services Wales (HRSW) for ArchiSpec on behalf of Mr. Nevil Topham, owner of Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion, as part of a condition for an archaeological watching brief during ground work for the conversion of the church and parts of the existing graveyard into a residential dwelling.
- 1.2 After being contacted by ArchiSpec to undertake the work, HRSW submitted a project specification to Cambria Archaeology, the regional Archaeological Trust in Llandeilo, detailing the schedule of works in December 2007. This specification was approved and the watching brief work was undertaken between the months of April - October 2008.
- 1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief*, and current Health and Safety legislation.

### Planning Background

- 1.4 Planning permission was granted by Ceredigion County Council for the proposed conversion (Ref: A060910) subject to an archaeological condition as laid out below.

**Condition (No.16):** 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 which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In order to protect the potential archaeological interests whilst enabling consented development in accordance with paragraph 22 of Circular 60/96 'Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology'.

### **Proposed Development Elements**

1.5 The proposed development for change of use into a residential dwelling entailed the following work.

- Ground level raised in area between Vestry and Porch for the insertion of a conservatory.
- All interior architectural features to be retained apart from floor level reduction in the Chancel and Vestry parts of the church, for insertion of under-floor heating.
- Insertion of new services including a foul drain running below the present church path and leading to a septic tank at the south-east end of the church enclosure.
- Car Parking area to east of church. Top soil strip.
- Access path to graveyard to be regraded and widened at entrance.

### **Site Location & Description** (see Figs 1, 2, & 3)

1.6 Nant Cwnlle Church is located approximately 10km north of the town of Lampeter and approximately 9km south-east of the coastal town of Aberaeron (NGR: SN 5764 5857). The church finds itself nestled on a terraced area on a slope between two hills, 'Fan' to the west and a smaller hill directly to the east surmounted by the remains of the Iron Age hillfort of Pen-y-gaer.

### **Geology**

1.7 The geology of the area is of sedimentary rock of Telychian within the Llandovery series of the Silurian period. Local geology indicates grey clays overlying sedimentary grey shale.

### **Brief Historical & Archaeological Background**

1.8 The church of St. Cwnlle (PRN: 4787) and the surrounding churchyard (PRN: 50156) are considered to be important components of Ceredigion's historic environment. Documentary accounts imply that Nantcwnlle Church was established in about 590 A.D, by Gwynlleu (a 6<sup>th</sup> century welsh saint. Gwynlleu was the son of St. Cyngar Ab Arthog Ab Ceredig Ab Cunedda Wledig) and supposedly the church was burned by some English rogues in 860 and, in 1070, by a band of Danes and Normans and destroyed after that by the sons of Gruffydd ap Rhys in 1150.

1.8 The current church building, which was likely built on the site of the previous medieval building, was apparently constructed in 1841 and was later extended and refurbished in 1887. The present church is considered to have important historic, architectural and intrinsic value and to be a significant part of the local heritage, contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

1.10 Of equal archaeological value is the surrounding churchyard, which undoubtedly includes burials from at least the last 700 years, possibly more considering the Celtic dedication of the 6<sup>th</sup> century Saint Gwnlleu (Cwnlle) to the church. Also, the sub-oval shape of the large church enclosure, suggests a pre-Norman establishment, again, possibly even a pre-Christian origin. The earliest exposed surface tombstones are 18<sup>th</sup> century in date and most are located in the north and west of the enclosure, possibly due to the fact that the lower south and south-eastern areas are very boggy and marshy in character which implied the presence of a natural spring.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The program of archaeological work entailed three key elements.

- i) A photographic record of all interior and exterior elevations and views of the church and churchyard. This will be undertaken following English Heritage guidelines for Building Recording Level 1.
- ii) A rapid desk based assessment of all readily available material relating to the church and associated churchyard from the regional Sites and Monuments Record at Llandeilo.
- iii) An archaeological watching brief during the groundwork for the septic tank and all other service trenches, during all top-soil stripping for the car park area and other general landscaping including improvements to the access entrance track and an archaeological watching brief during floor level reductions in the Chancel and Vestry, for under-floor heating within interior of church.

2.1 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance*, the aims of an archaeological watching brief are

- 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 other potentially disruptive works.
- to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

2.2 A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

2.3 The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

## 3 Methodology

3.1 With regards the watching brief, the ground work was undertaken by the contractor using a mechanical digger with a 0.75 meter wide grading bucket and hand shovel when deemed necessary, under the guidance of the qualified supervising archaeologist.

3.2 Once topsoil had been stripped back for each element of the proposed groundwork, the area was then inspected for any potential archaeological features or finds. Once this had been done and no significant features were evident, the groundwork continued. Limited cleaning of service trenches and the exposed ground surface following floor reductions in the Chancel and the Vestry was undertaken in order to ascertain the existence or non-existence of any archaeological features and deposits.

3.3 Where features were present limited excavation was undertaken to establish the character, date, depth, preservation, extent, function and relationship to other features.

3.4 Recording of ground plans, trenches and exposed features was undertaken in three formats:

- i) *Photographic record* - Photographs were taken in digital format using a 10 mega-pixel camera

recording in high resolution JPEG files. Where deemed necessary standard 35 mm film format in Black and White was also appropriated

- ii) *Drawn record* - Site drawings, plans and sections, were produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film, where deemed necessary. Finished drawings have been related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.
  - iii) *Written record* - Written records were produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts.
- 3.5 An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it. However, in this instance it was felt that the deposits encountered required no sampling.
- 3.6 With regards the potential for human remains becoming exposed from hitherto unknown burials with articulated remains or from random disarticulated remains from former disturbed burials, an osteo-archaeologist was on hand should they have been required. However in this instance this was not considered necessary.
- 3.7 All recovered disarticulated remains were briefly examined for identification purposes, bagged up and labelled accordingly. Following this and following guidelines from the Ministry of Justice, all of the disarticulated human remains were then re buried in an agreed position within the existing graveyard enclosure, at the southern end between the Vestry and the Porch.
- 3.8 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological field watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

## 4. Results of Desk Based Assessment

- 4.1 In order to introduce and put Nant Cwnlle Church into an historical context within its wider parish setting, who better to cite than Samuel Lewis's early 19<sup>th</sup> century topographic description of the parish in his *Topographic Dictionary of Wales* of 1833. In this Samuel Lewis describes the parish of Nant Cwnlle thus,

"NANTCWNLE (NANT-GYNLLO), a parish, partly in the upper division of the hundred of MOYTHEN, and partly in the lower division of the hundred of PENARTH, county of CARDIGAN, SOUTH WALES, 8 miles (N.) from Lampeter, containing 686 inhabitants. This parish derives its name from a small brook, which flows into the river Aêron by which it is intersected, and from the dedication of its church to St. Cynllo, an eminent British saint, who flourished about the middle of the fifth century. The river Aêron here forms a boundary between the hundreds of Moythen and Penarth: the vale through which it flows abounds with pleasingly varied scenery, and the views over the surrounding country combine many objects of interest. The parish constitutes a prebend in the collegiate church of Brecknock, valued in the king's books at £7.6.8., and in the patronage of the Bishop of St. David's. The living is a discharged vicarage, in the archdeaconry of Cardigan, and diocese of St. David's, rated in the king's books at £3.13. 4., endowed with £ 600 royal bounty, and £ 600 parliamentary grant, and in the patronage of the Bishop of St. David's. The tithes are divided between the prebendary and the vicar, the former of whom has two-thirds, and the latter one-third. The church, dedicated to St. Cynllo, is a small plain edifice, consisting of a nave and chancel, and is not distinguished by any architectural details of importance. There are some remains of an ancient intrenchment, called "Pen y Gaer." The average annual expenditure for the support of the poor is £ 110.10." [From *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (S. Lewis, 1833).]

- 4.2 St. Cynllo's or Nant Cwnlle Church as it is otherwise known is referenced in the Welsh Historic Churches



Project undertaken by Cadw in 2000. The church in this report is described thus,

St Cynllo, Nantcwnlle, is a 3-celled church, of small size. It was probably rebuilt in the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the same location as its predecessor (PRN 4787) and was extended and restored in 1886 under the architect A. Ritchie of Chester (NLW, SD/F/509).

The present church consists of a 2-bayed chancel, a 3-bayed nave which was extended by one bay in 1886, a south porch and a single-bayed vestry south of the chancel west bay. Construction is in local rubble, refaced in 1886; plastered within. All dressings are in grey oolite and from 1886, including the chancel arch; the openings are neo-gothic comprising cusped double lancets and cusped 2- and 3-light windows with simple tracery. The north side is buttressed, 1886. There is an external string-course around the porch, 1886. The 1886 vestry fireplace is disused, its chimney gone. A simple, gabled single bellcote lies at the west end. The roofs are slated gables; the vestry has a slated half-hipped roof. Floors are suspended, but over solid infill, except in the porch.

The pre-1886 restoration church is shown in plan and elevation in the 1886 faculty bundle (NLW, SD/F/509) and in a pre-1886 drawing reproduced in Evans, 1915, 77. It appears to have been a construction of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century exhibiting no evidence of having retained any earlier fabric. It comprises a single cell, the chancel and nave without any structural division. It was entered through a semicircular headed west door with steps down to the nave floor; a similar door lay at the east end of the south wall. There was a window in the north wall, 3 in the south wall and one in the east wall; all had simple 2-centred heads and timber Y-tracery. A simple, single gabled bellcote with a semicircular-headed opening lay on the west end.

The church was restored in 1886 to the designs of the architect A. Ritchie of Chester (NLW, SD/F/509). The restoration was high-impact. The west wall was removed, the nave was extended west by one bay, with a new bellcote, and the south porch and vestry were built. It appears that the remainder of the walls were at least refaced if not rebuilt; the windows were infilled and only the south door was retained. The church was refenestrated and 2 buttresses were built against the north wall. The church was reroofed, refloored (the new floor 0.3m higher than the old), and reseated.

There is a deep, wide external cutting along the north side and a corresponding earthwork platform beneath the southern half of the church, possibly primary but the cutting was deepened and widened in 1886. The floor levels were raised in 1886, suspended over solid infill above the old floors. Some memorials lie significantly close to the east wall.

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-

Celtic dedication; large suboval yard; association with nearby Pen-y-gaer hillfort (PRN 4791)? (Various, 1994, 403).

St Cynllo, Nantcwnlle, was a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Ultra-Aeron. It was a possession of the Bishop of St Davids, lying at the centre of an episcopal grange, as a prebend of the collegiate church at Brecon valued at £7 6s 8d (Lewis, 1833).

In 1833 the living was a discharged vicarage in the patronage of the Bishop, rated in the king's books at £3 13 4d, endowed with £600 royal bounty and £600 parliamentary grant (ibid.) The tithes were divided between the prebendary and the vicar (ibid.).

In 1998 St Cynllo, Nantcwnlle, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Llanfihangel Ystrad, Cilcennin and Trefilan (Benefice no. 698) in the Archdeaconry of Cardigan, Rural Deanery of Glyn Aeron (St Davids, 1997-8).

(taken from the entry in the *Cadw: Welsh Historic Churches Project 2000*)

- 4.3 With reference to the 1886 ground plan and elevation drawing mentioned in the text, held within Church Records deposited with the National Library of Wales in a faculty bundle, at the time of writing this archive was not readily available for inspection, however a copy of the pre 1886 drawing, reproduced from an original photograph, in the 1915 article by Evans in *Transactions of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society* has been reproduced in Figure 21.
- 4.4 A further ground plan showing the church following the 1886 extension is also reproduced in Figure 20. This ground plan highlights the structural changes that took place at that time with the known pre 1886 ground plan also high-lighted in black.

4.5 A further entry in the later *Cambria Archaeology: Cadw Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites Project 2004* discusses the sites history.

Early medieval D site, ie. possible early medieval origins. Churchyard occupied by the medieval Nantcwnlle parish church PRN 4787, which was listed, as 'Nantwenclen', in the 'Taxatio' of 1291. The church was probably a Welsh foundation, Ceredigion remaining in Welsh hands during most of the 12th and 13th centuries. It was an episcopal grange chapel, as a prebend of the collegiate church at Llanddewi Brefi, by 1326; it was possibly a later medieval acquisition of St Davids, having been in private patronage at an earlier date?, ie. the tithes were divided between the prebendary and the vicar. The large, suboval churchyard was formerly more oval, but the east end was 'straightened-out' during the 19th century. It lies at the head of a small valley, on the northern slopes of Dyffryn Acron, and two springs rise 100m southwest of the site. It lies 220m north of Pen-y-gaer iron age hillfort PRN 4791 and James has suggested that the churchyard may be associated with the hillfort, possibly indicating iron age origins for both sites, representing a 'paired site' where partible inheritance meant that the cemetery/churchyard may have become a kin burial ground through gift or the presence of a founder's grave (James 1994, 405). The churchyard is now nuclear to an early post-medieval field pattern. It has been suggested that the original, 'Celtic' dedication was to St Gwynlleu (O Riain 1994, 391), the St Cynllo dedication being a later corruption. NDL 2004

(from *Cambria Archaeology: Cadw Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites Project 2004*)

4.6 As with many small parish churches in Wales there is usually very little known about the local history of the church other than brief references made within medieval land deeds, but these documents are not always readily available and are at times hard to decipher. However with regards Nant Cwnlle Church there has been several local writers over the years who have made reference to the church. One such writer was the Reverend Evan Edwardes who undertook fairly extensive research into the history of the parish of Nantcwnlle in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The following text by the Rev. Evan Edwardes has been extracted and adapted from sections of his book that was published by the 'Cambrian News' Aberystwyth, Ltd., 1930 and recently translated into English by Jenni Hyatt, in July 2003. Although of little use with regards the medieval periods of the church, the article gives a very good insight into the church and the parishes post medieval history, especially with reference to the churches social and religious history.

"The parish is not one which is notable for being full of ancient things. It obtained its name from the patron of the parish church, as did most of the parishes in Wales. Years ago it was usually called Llan-cwnlle but it is now called Nantcwnlle. Baring Gould and Fisher in their 'Lives of British Saints', Vol. iii, p. 234, say that there are few examples of Llan changing to Nant, as in Llanhyfer to Nanthyfer (Nevern) - and Llan-cwnlle changing to Nantcwnlle can be added - there are more examples of Nant changing to Llan, like Nantcarfan to Llan-carfan; Nant-honddu to Llanthony etc. The most accurate name for the parish would be *Llangwynlleu*, because it was Gwynlleu who founded the church of Nantcwnlle and was its patron in 590 A.D. (More will be said about Gwynlleu when discussing the history and traditions of the church later on.)

The parish stands in the lowest section of the Hundred of Penarth..... Its size is 4607 acres. It is two and a half miles wide in places and about six miles long.....As recently as the beginning of the nineteenth century, almost half the county was common land; and much of the land in the upper end of the parish, from Crynfryn to Llyn-farch, remained so until the middle of the century. Many houses have been built on it during the last eighty years, so that the common land is now all under ownership and, for the most part, under cultivation.

There is little evidence of ancient remains here. There are no cromlechs or burial stones or meinhirs or dolmens anywhere and few weapons have been found. A cup was found in a group of stones on Ty'nrrhos bank on Abermeurig estate and was kept there safely for years but, for one reason or another, it is now in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff. The cup was discovered in the time of Dr. Rogers, the father of the late Mr. John Edwardes

Rogers, and its like has not been seen anywhere..... The name Blaencastell indicates that there was some sort of castle in the neighbourhood when this house was built because there was always thought and reason behind the names chosen by the old Welsh for their houses. The house would not have been called Blaencastell were there not some building close by that was called a castle, although the name did not have the same connotations in the old days as it has today.....Not far from Blaencastell is Pen-y-Gaer above Hafod and the name suggests that some army had been encamped there at some time; it's probable that it was a British army to keep watch on the Romans who were encamped at Llanio and that they raised some sort of fortress here which was called a castle and that this is the reason for the name Blaencastell a little way from Pen-y-Gaer.

### *The Church*

Since the church registers go back only as far as 1768, little can be said about the church before that date. Rev. David Edwardes says, in an article in 'Yr Haul', May and June 1913, that Nantcwnlle Church was established about 590 A.D. by Gwynlleu (and Baring Gould and Fisher in their 'Lives of the British Saints' say that Gwynlleu was the son of St. Cyngar Ab Arthog Ab Ceredig Ab Cunedda Wledig) and that the church was burned by some English rogues in 860 and, in 1070, by a band of Danes and Normans and destroyed after that by the sons of Gruffydd ap Rhys in 1150. Their reason for carrying out such an atrocity is not known. There existed in that period people like the Kensitites and Suffragettes of our age who thought that the world could be put to rights by burning and destroying valuable houses and property.

According to an old Deed in the NLW there was some connection between Nantcwnlle Parish and the parish of Llanddewi Brefi, but it is difficult to say what the connection is. It says that the Manor of Llanddewi contains six tithe towns, all in the parish of Llanddewi Brefi and that it also contains two independent parishes, Blaenpenal and Nantcwnlle, but it is not known what the connection was, since there is none now.

When Thomas Beck was the Archbishop of St David's (1280 - 1293), he established two colleges, one in Abergwili in 1283 and the other in Llanddewi in 1287 and it was appointed that two-thirds of the Nantcwnlle tithe should go towards the college in Abergwili, which was moved in 1542 to Brecon, and the Nantcwnlle tithe was returned to the Church Deputies in 1840 and part of it to the parish vicar in 1868. Thus the parish was deprived of two-thirds of the tithe for nearly six hundred years and it is said that St David's College, Lampeter, which celebrated its centenary in October 1927, is a development of Llanddewi Brefi College. After 1283, little is known about the history of Nantcwnlle Church for 350 years. During the rule of the tyrant, Oliver Cromwell, every ecclesiastical document that he and his deputies could get their hands on was burned and no value was placed on any work that had been done previously. During Cromwell's time some churches were turned into Nonconformist Chapels and the sacred churches were desecrated to such an extent that some of them were turned into stables for his horses.

According to the Episcopal Register of St David's (1917) Sir Phylip ap Rice was appointed Vicar of Nantcwnlle on June 15th 1490, after the resignation of Sir David, the former Vicar. On June 10th 1496, Sir David ap Ieuan was appointed Vicar on the resignation of Sir Phylip ap Rees.

After this, the earliest history of Nantcwnlle on which we can depend is that Edward Herbert was appointed Vicar in 1637 and that he was turned out of his living in 1650 by Oliver Cromwell's deputies.

In 1661, Griffin Evans came here as Vicar, but there is no mention of him after the day of

his appointment to the living: "We have his name and that is all." There is no mention of another Vicar for 47 years and it is unlikely that Griffin Evans lived, as Vicar, for that length of time. As this was the time of Cromwell's rule, we think he either burned the records or forbade services to be held in the church as he did in many parishes. In this period, or at least part of it, Nantcwnlle and Ystrad went together as one living, which was called Llanfihangel Ystrad Nantcwnlle and both parishes, together with Trefilan, were under the care of the same Rector, Rev. Hugh Lloyd. In 1697 the priest of every parish was given several questions to answer and some of the answers, in the case of Nantcwnlle, were as follows: "Name of the parish: Llanfihangel Ystrad Nantcwnlle. The feast of the parish's patron saint was the first Sunday after Michaelmas; from this we can gather that Ystrad was considered the more important. (The feast of the patron saint was held to remember the dedication of the parish church to religious service. It began as a Christian celebration but by this time had become rather corrupt.) The other answers concerned the games played in the parish, the produce of the land and the different animals which were kept, and that the three parishes, Nantcwnlle, Trefilan and Ystrad were under the care of Hugh Lloyd, Rector. The next event which is recorded after Griffin Evans's appointment to the living is the death of Thomas Evans, Vicar, in 1708 and the appointment as Vicar of Daniel Rowlands, the father of the Revivalist, who was here until his death in 1731. He had two sons, John and Daniel. John was ordained in 1726 and worked as his father's curate serving in Llangeitho and Nantcwnlle; on his father's death in 1731, he was appointed to the living. At that time it was not necessary for young men to have a degree or go to college at all before being ordained. Several pupils of the grammar schools in Ystrad Meurig and Lampeter were ordained before St David's Theological College, Lampeter, was established. Some say that Daniel Rowland was born in Llangeitho Rectory but it is more likely that he was born in Pant-y-beudy (Nantcwnlle) in 1713, the youngest of six children, two sons and four daughters. Daniel received his early education in Pany-y-Gido, near Llanarth and, after that, in Hereford Grammar School. (Many Welsh priests were educated in Hereford.) From there he was ordained by Bishop Clagget of St David's, in March 1733 in London, when he was only twenty years old, three years before the usual time for ordination, and there must have been something exceptional in his learning and character before the Bishop would have broken the rule and ordained him so young because the Bishop refused to ordain Howell Harris until he reached the age of twenty-three. Daniel Rowland was ordained curate to his brother, John, in Llangeitho and Nantcwnlle, for £10 a year. John drowned accidentally in Aberystwyth in 1860, after being the Vicar of Nantcwnlle for twenty-nine years. It is likely that Llangeitho and Nantcwnlle until that time went together as one living under the same Vicar because, when John Rowland died in 1760, they were separated and Rev. Isaac Williams was appointed Vicar of Nantcwnlle. As Isaac Williams did not need a curate it was expected that Daniel Rowland would be appointed Rector of Llangeitho after his brother, John, but his son, John, was appointed in his place, and it is likely that he was none too pleased about this, although he continued as curate to his son. Before long he began to kick against the traces and went to preach wherever he was asked to do so and, before long, Capel Gwynfil was built for him, where he preached with great conviction. Some say that he was expelled from Nantcwnlle Church but there is no truth in that because, when Rev. Isaac Williams came here as Vicar he did not want a curate, so that was the end of Daniel Rowland's curacy in Nantcwnlle, but that does not mean he was turned out. It is claimed by many that he was forbidden to preach and to serve the Sacraments in the church by Bishop Samuel Squire in 1763 but that is not true either, because the Nantcwnlle Register records Daniel Rowland christening Esther, the daughter of John Morgan, Cilpyll, on March 10th 1770, seven years after it is claimed he was expelled, and he would not have dared do this if he had been stripped of his priesthood. It is interesting to note here that Rev. Hugh Lloyd, Cilpyll, married the above Esther on November 19th 1796 and, as Mrs Lloyd, Cilpyll, she was well-known throughout the parish as a kind and generous gentlewoman.

Daniel Rowland had three sons, two of whom became priests: this is proof that he had not

turned against the Church despite having been passed over by some of the Church authorities.

The first entry in the Nantcwnlle Registers is John Williams, curate, publishing marriage banns in April, 1764. In 1765, John Thomas is appointed to the living on the resignation of Isaac Williams, but nothing more is known about him; one John Evans, curate, signs the church register until 1770. From this we gather that John Thomas was an absentee Vicar. In 1770 - 1771, John Lewis signs the registers and, during the above years there is much uncertainty concerning the vicars as several priests signed the registers apart from those whose appointment to the living is recorded, so it is difficult to know whether they were curates, or what. From 1773 to 1777 (the year of the three mattocks), Griffith Davies was here as Curate. (More will be said about him under the heading 'Sunday School'.) It is not known what became of John Thomas, whether he died when he was Vicar, or gave up the post, or was promoted to another. In 1776, John Parry was made Vicar. He was probably another absentee, since two curates, Griffith Davies and Rees Williams, signed the registers until the death of the Vicar in 1788. After that, Rees Williams was appointed Vicar and was here until he left in 1795. His successor was John Evans, Trefrân, who had been educated in Ystrad Meurig School, and who was here for half a century, until his death in 1845. He usually kept a curate. He was neither a great scholar nor much of a preacher and it was probably because he was aware of his own shortcomings that he kept a curate. During John Evans's incumbency several curates signed the registers, such as John Jones, John Hughes, Richard Richards, Hugh Lloyd, Thomas Edwardes, Stephen Jones, Evan Evans, Daniel Jones, Thomas Thomas and David Jones. John Jones came here first as a schoolmaster in 1793. He was ordained in 1806 and, in 1808 he signed the registers as 'John Jones, perpetual curate of Betws and Gartheli'. He had excellent handwriting and he taught many of the parishioners to write. He was buried in Nantcwnlle churchyard and his grave is to be seen on the southern side of the church. It is likely that this is the John Jones who became Vicar of Tregaron and who was buried in Nantcwnlle in 1839.

After John Jones, Richard Richards came here as curate. He was educated in Ystrad Meurig and ordained in 1808 as curate of Llanddeiniol and Nantcwnlle, for which he received £25 a year. That, he said, was enough to pay for his food and lodge and for a horse to take him to Llanddeiniol on a Sunday morning. He kept a school during the week in a rather poor house close to the church and this, he said, brought in enough money to pay for his clothes. In time a rich relative of his died leaving him a considerable amount of money but, forty years later he said that the happiest time of his life was when he was in Nantcwnlle having to struggle to make ends meet. He was here from 1808 to 1814.

In 1813 John Hughes signs the registers and calls himself the 'curate of Nantcwnlle'. It is not known why both he and Richard Richards were here until 1814, unless the latter gave up his curacy after inheriting property from his rich relation and stayed in the parish for a year before moving to the North. He was one of the five sons of Mr. Richards, the Rector of Darowen, near Machynlleth. All five were respectable and able clergymen who gained honourable and dignified reputations in the Diocese of St Asaph. Richard was a serious and charming preacher when he was in Nantcwnlle and, after he went to Caerwys (?) he became extremely popular as a preacher. Nothing is known about him from the time when he left Nantcwnlle in 1814 until he became the Vicar of Caerwys in 1826. He was there until 1849, when he moved to Meifod and he was there until 1860. He wrote a considerable amount for the monthly publication 'Yr Eglwysydd' (The Churchman) in the years 1847 - 1849 under the name Pererin (Pilgrim) where he gives much interesting information about himself. His picture is to be seen today on the wall of the library of St Asaph Cathedral.

In 1786 one John Hughes came here from Blaenporth parish and married Letitia Grey, Sychbant, where they lived throughout their lives. They had a son, William Grey Hughes,

who was Vicar of Llandysul and Rector of Mathry and one of the best preachers and orators of his period. It is likely that the above John Hughes signed the register in January 1813 and was buried on April 3rd, within three months.

The next curate was Thomas Edwardes. He was the son of David Edwardes, Bryncethin, Llangeitho. He was educated in Ystrad Meurig and there is an interesting story about him and his brother, who was also preparing for the ministry. They and others were lodging in a house where the food was pretty bad; their breakfast was sop and whey - more whey than sop - and, one morning when those two, along with one or two others, had sat down at the table and started eating, the man of the house said he was surprised at them, young men intending to become priests, because they hadn't asked a blessing on the food. At once one of the two brothers rose on his feet and said:

'Tasteless whey, to God be the glory,  
I can see right to the bottom;  
It once had a good bottom (good sediment)  
But that was destroyed before it came here'.

That blessing served its purpose; they had better breakfasts after that. Thomas Edwardes was ordained in 1813 by Bishop Burgess and he signed the registers consistently from 1813 to 1820. After that he was curate in Silian and Gartheli; he was appointed Rector of Llangeitho in 1839 by Bishop Jenkinson and remained there until his death in 1852. He married one of the daughters of Dr. Lewis, Meidrin, Llangeitho, and they had several children but they all died young. The last surviving child was Mary, the wife of Rev. David Edwardes (Crynfryn) and she died in 1871, in Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, aged 32.

In 1831, one Thomas Thomas signs the registers. He was one of the first students to enter Lampeter College, when it was established in 1827 and he came out in the first class in 1830. The college had not, at this stage, been given the authority to award degrees to its students. He was the curate of Nantcwnlle for three years, then he went to Llanellwedd near Builth Wells, where he stayed until 1838, when he was appointed Vicar of Cregina and Llanbadarn-y-Gareg, where he remained for fifty years. Several clergymen signed the registers during the incumbency of Vicar Evans, Trefrân, who was often incapable of performing his church duties. Three of the rectors of Llangeitho signed the registers, all of whom lived in Nantcwnlle Parish, namely Hugh Lloyd, in Cilpyll; Thomas Edwardes in Troedrhiw and Evan Evans in Hafod, the two former in the time of Vicar Evans. After fifty years as Vicar, he died in 1845, aged 88, and Evan Evans, the curate of Gartheli, was appointed as his successor. He lived in Llaethliw, near Aberaeron, about eight miles from the church, and it is easy to believe what is said about him, which is that he did not visit his parishioners very often, and he was never seen in the upper part of the parish, but he was very kind and generous. It can be said of him, as Daniel Ddu said of someone:

'He gave quietly from his hand and from his  
court,  
What he could out of true willingness'.

He used to send several blankets every year to be shared amongst the poor of the parish. When he became Vicar of the Parish he was a relatively wealthy man but, because his generous heart was bigger than his pocket, he died a poor man.

In 1864, Bishop Thirlwall appointed Rev. Evan Williams, the Vicar of Silian, to the living. He had been the curate here from 1857 to 1864, and in Beaufort before that. He was educated in Lampeter College. The stipend was very small at that time. Two-thirds of the tithe went to Brecon every year. According to the Diocesan Report for 1809 the yearly value

of the living was £79 19s 8d (it had been less than that), and, according to the report for 1835, the year before the passing of the *Tithe Commutation Act*, - that the tithe was to be paid in money and not in property, - it was worth £90 with a house, but a very unsuitable house for a clergyman to live in. But, despite the small salary, Mr Williams and his wife raised a large family of six sons and three daughters, all of whom received a good education; one gaining a B.A. from Lampeter, one an Oxford M.A. and two Cambridge M.A.s. Three became clergymen, one a schoolteacher and two Bank Managers. The two youngest sons are still alive (1930); Walter is the Vicar of Bodelwyddan and James, the youngest, who was the Vicar of Gresford, has been appointed a Canon in St Asaphs. Vicar Williams was a quiet, peaceful and hard-working character. As soon as he became Vicar he started to build a new vicarage, on land in the Aeron Valley which had been bought by the Governors of the Q.A.B. in 1760, and the house was finished in 1868. Until then only a morning service was held in the church but, as soon as he and his family went to live in the vicarage, he began holding an evening service, and a Sunday School in his house, where it remained for nearly three years, when it was moved to the church and was very successful, numbering about seventy pupils.

Mr Williams, however, was not happy to have the Sunday school in the church so, in 1876, he built a schoolroom near the church for the Sunday School and other meetings such as concerts, lectures etc. He was in his element, 'as happy as a Spring swallow', when handling bricks and mortar. After finishing the schoolroom it was not long before he began to repair and enlarge the church, which was in a pretty poor condition at the time. While he was rebuilding the church the services were held in the schoolroom. The pulpit from the church was taken there to be used and it is still there. The church was re-opened on November 24th 1887 and Bishop Basil Jones preached here on that day. The renovation cost £1,000. The building of a new vicarage, a useful schoolroom and the renovation and extension of a church by one vicar is praiseworthy work. Vicar Williams liked everything to be decent and orderly and had the talent to achieve it. It can be said of him as someone said of Caradog, the conductor of the Welsh choir in the Crystal Palace, "He did not swell up with pride in good times and he did not lose heart in adversity." He died in 1911 aged 83. He was a Rural Dean for over twenty years. Towards the end he had been forced, because of old age and ill-health, to have a curate to help him, and Rev. Fred Jones was here for some months, then, after him, and, from the day of the Vicar's death in May until his successor arrived in the autumn, Rev. David Edwardes, Crynfryn, took over the care of the parish and the church services.

In 1911 Bishop John Owen appointed Rev. Daniel Morgan Davies, the Vicar of Tregaron, to succeed Mr. Williams in Nantcwnlle. He was the first graduate vicar to be appointed to this church. He was educated in Lampeter School and College; he graduated with a B.A. in 1884 and was ordained the following year. With his agreement Rev. David Edwardes and his brothers built a Mission Church on church land near Twrgwyn in the upper part of the parish. It was opened on June 17th 1913 by the Bishop of Swansea, John Lloyd, who preached in the afternoon, with Canon William Williams of Letterston (the present Dean of St. David's) preaching in the afternoon. The sermons were delivered in the open air, since the church could not accommodate even a tenth of the congregation. The church was dedicated to St. Gronw, who, according to tradition, was martyred because of his faith in a field on Crynfryn's land, some half a mile from the church. With the Vicar's co-operation, Mr. Edwardes served this church diligently while his health lasted and his death was a great loss to it; its success was very close to his heart. The Bishop appointed Mr. John Jones, Oakhill, as a lay reader to hold the Sunday evening service and to run the Sunday School when Mr. Edwardes' health broke down. The church owned the land on which the Mission Church had been built. When the mountain land, which had been common land, was shared out about 1836, this field was set aside for the use of the parish church. Owing to ill-health, Vicar Davies had to give up the living early in 1928 and he went to live in Aberystwyth but

he died in November and was buried in Tregaron. Soon after he came to Nantcwnlle from Tregaron he started a club for the young people, - Urdd St. Gwynlleu in the schoolroom of Nantcwnlle Church and Urdd St. Gronw in the Mission Church. Both were a great success and brought together young people who had literary tendencies and a thirst for knowledge. Generally speaking the parishioners supported Mr. Davies in this project.

His successor in Nantcwnlle is Rev. Thomas Tudor Davies who came here from Llandygwydd and was appointed to the living on June 21st 1928.

### *The Value of the Living*

At the end of the 13th century, the living was worth £13. By 1809, it had risen to £71 19s 8d. According to the Diocesan Report for 1835 it was worth £90, together with a house which was unsuitable for a clergyman to live in. I have said before that two-thirds of the parish tithe went to Brecon College but, in 1868, £67 a year came back to Nantcwnlle through the Church Deputies, thereby increasing the value of the living so that, by 1906, it was worth £287 19s 10d and is now worth £318.

The Vicar of Nantcwnlle received his stipend from various sources, such as part from the tithe, part from the Church Representatives and the Q.A.B. and the rent from church land in the parish and, between everything, the salary was often quite a problem. But things have improved for Welsh clergymen in this respect. Some things which initially appear to be harmful turn out to be a blessing. The passing of the Disestablishment and Disendowment Bill in 1914 was not done out of the kindness of the Church's heart but it did not turn out as badly as was feared; rather it has been a temporal blessing to the clergy, whatever its spiritual effects, because they now receive their salary in one sum every three months on the appointed day without any trouble or expense or cross words. And, since 1919, when the Act came into power, every Vicar receives his stipend in full and on time and the parishioners have the pleasure of paying the tithe as before but now it is paid to the County Council's Representatives and no-one dare ask for anything back. The living is in the Archdeaconry of Cardigan and has been, until the Disestablishment, a gift from the Bishop, but is now the gift of the Patrons' Board.

### *Sunday School*

Robert Raikes of Gloucester has immortalised himself as the founder of the Sunday School in England, and Thomas Charles of Bala in Wales, but a school had been held in Twrgwyn some years before them. It was in 1784 that Robert Raikes started the Sunday School in England and in 1789 that Thomas Charles started one in Wales but, from 1773 to 1777, there was a curate in Nantcwnlle by the name of Griffith Davies and he was very hard-working. He took the service in Nantcwnlle on Sunday morning and in Llangeitho in the afternoon; on Sunday evenings he held a school in Twrgwyn. It is not known whether or not he started this school but he was there between 1773 and 1777. The school remained in Twrgwyn until it was turned into a tavern about 1815, then it was moved to Bwlch-di-wyrgam on the invitation of Mr John Williams, the grandfather of the late Mr John Jones. One of the teachers in Twrgwyn was Thomas Williams, Felin-newydd, and there are some people alive today who can remember hearing Thomas say that this was the first Sunday School in Wales. He was a teacher in Twrgwyn, the superintendent in Bwlch and he was made a deacon in Penuwch when the Methodists built a chapel there. He also used to hold a night school in the evenings. Thomas Williams was considered not only to be a religious man but a godly one. He died in 1855 (Perl y Plant - *The Children's Pearl*, 1912). The first Sunday School in Penuwch was held in Pencraig-fach, near Lluest-debra, about 1814; when the house became too small a small schoolroom was built on the site of the present chapel. A



bigger one was built in 1839 and that was turned into a chapel in 1844. This was extended in 1867 to its present size. The Sunday School was in Twrgwyn for 40 years and in Bwlch for 29. A Sunday School was started in Pant-y-Bedy in 1819. This was called a united school because everyone attended it, established church and Methodists. The school was held in Pant-y-bedy in the winter and in Nantcwnlle Church in the summer. The first superintendent of the united school was Jack y Gaer and its secretary was Ben the Carpenter, Goitre Uchaf, two characters who were much loved in the neighbourhood. In 1836 a school was built in Bwlchllan and, after that, the Sunday School was held there. After five years this building was pulled down and the Methodists built a chapel in its place, with a schoolroom at the gable end, on land which Dr. Morgan, Frongoch, had leased to them. Eight years after the school was built, Bwlch School joined with Bwlchllan School. By 1844 the school had increased to 120 pupils and fifteen teachers. Whoever started the Sunday School it is likely that the idea came from the excellent effect of the circulating schools of the Rev. Griffith Jones, Llanddowror. Thomas Charles of Bala said it was easy to establish schools in places where the Griffith Jones's circulating schools had been because there were suitable teachers there who were willing to help. Before the school was moved from Bwlch to join Bwlchllan, Mr. Lloyd, Cilpyll, the Rector of Llangeitho, had started a Sunday School in Penuwch to meet the increase in the population and many of the Bwlch scholars, who lived in the upper part of the parish, went to Penuwch.

Generally speaking it can be said that there were and are only Churchgoers and Methodists in the parish, with the exception of a few Independents (Welsh Congregationalists) in the bottom of the parish. An excellent union lasted between Church and Chapel in connection with the Sunday School until 1868, when there was an election for a Member of Parliament for the County, the two sides became divided and many unkind things were said about the Church. The Churchgoers decided it was time they stood on their own feet to defend the Church and its doctrines and they decided they wanted a Sunday School of their own, where they could train the pupils in the teaching of the Book of Common Prayer, although the united school had been so dear to them until that time. By this time a new vicarage had been built and the Sunday School was started there, where it was very successful for nearly three years, when it was moved to the Church and then to the schoolroom after that was built. Until then Bwlchllan started its Sunday morning service at 9.30 in order to enable people to attend the Church service at 11.00, which many did, but, after this, they started their meeting at 10 o'clock. The first Chapel was built in Bwlchllan in 1841; this was renovated and extended in 1876.

Years ago it was mainly the Clergyman and the sexton who took the service; the congregation played little part in the service - the sermon was everything. Many of the old churches had what was called 'three deckers' which was a seat for the sexton on the floor with a place behind him and above his head for the clergyman to read the Service and a pulpit above that. This idea had been carried out in the old Nantcwnlle Church except that the reading place (lectern?) was not above the sexton's seat but was a sort of platform to one side of it and, from that platform, there was a stair or two ascending to the pulpit. Very few of these 'three deckers' can be seen now. The old church had two doors, one in the western end and the other on the south side, where now it leads into the Vestry. The old church did not have a vestry but the clergyman put on his vestments in the church and there was nothing to mark the difference between the chancel and the body of the church. There were two big pews in the chancel, one each side of the altar, - the one on the right belonging to the family of Abermeurig and the other one to the vicarage but this was done away with when the church was renovated. There are three stained glass windows in the present church, one above the altar placed there by Mr. John Edwardes Rogers in 1911, in memory of his parents; another was placed in the western end in 1913 by the children of Rev. E. Williams, in memory of their parents and their sister Mary Anne Williams; and another on the southern side by members of the church in memory of Rev. E. Williams, who was the

Vicar of the Parish from 1864 to 1911. Also in 1911, to celebrate their father's 50-year connection with the parish and his eightieth birthday, Mr Williams's sons and daughters presented the church with a set of silver communion dishes.

### *The Churchyard*

The churchyard, which is 1 acre, 1 rod and 1 perch in size, which is more or less an acre and a half, is almost round, as are the majority of old graveyards. The Ancient Druids worshipped in a circle in the open air as this, to them, represented eternity, a circle having no end. When the Druids were driven out of our country and Druidism was replaced by Christianity, the Christians built churches in these circles and set aside the land for burying the dead; that is why so many of the old churchyards, including Nantcwnlle, are round. Early in the history of Christianity it was usual to place a large cross near the entrance to the graveyard and the ground was not usually consecrated unless a cross had been placed there. If a fair or market was held in the parish it would be held in the churchyard around the cross. We would now see this as desecrating holy ground but the old Welsh people were not lacking in respect towards holy things; it is possible that they chose the consecrated ground around the church for their market in order to place their worldly business under the patronage and protection of the Church. After the hot-headed Puritans gained the upper hand in the control of the Church at the beginning of the Protestant Revival, they rejected, in their ignorance, many of the Church's old customs, including having a cross in the churchyard, so many of them were destroyed. It is difficult to imagine what reason they had for destroying the Cross, when they claimed to worship the Man who had suffered on it. It is possible that there was a big cross in Nantcwnlle churchyard, although there is no trace of one now, and that it was cast down by some uncivilised and cruel hand, as was the fate of so many others. After the destruction of these large crosses, people started placing a small cross at the head of the graves, and that was how this custom started.

It is not usual for many to be buried at the northern end of a church, but in Nantcwnlle there are more people buried at the northern end than there are in the southern end. That may be because it is drier. Looking at the northern end of this church and seeing the brow of the hill so full of graves, brings to mind a couplet by Cernyw Williams:

'In a graveyard on the edge of a mountain Rests the dust of saints.'

Under the gate at the entrance to the churchyard there is an iron grating to prevent sheep and pigs from entering. It has been traditional to plant yew trees in every churchyard, - there are seven in several, - seven being a scriptural number - and there is one yew in this graveyard which has possibly challenged the storms for years and another which is not so old. After the church was renovated about a dozen yew trees and *arbor vitae* were planted on either side of the path which leads from the gateway to the Church door. Yew trees are planted in preference to other types of tree because the yew is evergreen, which symbolises the eternity of the soul. In addition to this, the wood is harder than that of most trees, and the branches were used to make arrows in the old days, which could be shot from a bow as a defence against enemies. From the earliest times the parishioners had to pay a tax towards the upkeep of the Church building and the graveyard and, in the 14th century, a law was passed that compelled every landowner who owned land in the parish to pay this tax, whether he lived in the parish or not. The Quakers were the first to object to paying it. There were many proposals in Parliament to pass a Bill to abolish the tax and this was done in 1868, but 'church tax' is still paid in some parishes in England. Until about the end of the nineteenth century, the churchyard was the only burial ground in the parish. (Some think that there had been burials in one of Hafod's fields, near Goitre.) It was in 1895 that burials started in Bwlchllan Chapel graveyard and David Jones, Meiarth, was the first to be buried there on January 9th 1895, aged 73. (Burials had taken place in Penuwch Chapel graveyard before

the middle of the nineteenth century and this took in many from the upper end of the parish; the first to be buried there was Daniel Williams, Lluest-y-pwddel, December 1844.)

It was the custom in the old Nantcwnlle Church in the nineteenth century to remove the plates bearing the name and age of the deceased from the coffin before burial and to hang them on the wall in the Church. Eventually they would be put in a chest and buried but this practice was discontinued when the Church was repaired in 1887. (Although I have discussed this with many old clergyman, very few have heard of this practice occurring outside of Nantcwnlle.)

*Clergymen buried in Nantcwnlle*

1813 John Hughes, Sychbant. He signed the register on January 23rd and was buried on April 3rd the same year, aged 53.

1824 March 20th . W. Grey Hughes, aged 32, the son of the above J. Hughes. He was the Vicar of Llandysul and Rector of Mathry.

1836 January 7th , aged 69, Hugh Lloyd (Cilpyll), Rector of Llangeitho.

1839 October 31st , aged 63, John Jones, Vicar of Tregaron. (It's probable that he was the J. Jones who was a curate here in 1808.)

1845 April 8th , aged 88, John Evans (Trefrân), Vicar of the Parish.

1889 April 20th , aged 70, Evan Evans (Hafod), Rector of Llangeitho.

1911 May 18th , aged 83, Evan Williams, Vicar of the Parish.

1916 November 1st , aged 80, David Edwardes, M.A., Crynfryn, Headmaster of Denstone College, Staffordshire from 1878 - 1903.

1916 December 22nd , aged 75, David Jones, M.A., Penlanwnnws, Vicar of Gorsedd.  
Clergyman raised in the parish

*For the Commissioner of Excise*

We, Benjamin Morgan of Goytre and Thomas Jones of Nantgwnlle, Builders, do solemnly and sincerely declare that we contracted for the Performance of Seating, Ceiling and Glazing the Parish Church of Nantcwnlle in the Parish of Llancwnlle, in the County of Cardigan, and that in the Execution of such contract we used the following materials namely, one hundred and twenty feet of Glass. But when and where the duty thereon has been paid we cannot ascertain as the Glazier we employed has ....tracted ... for same.... it was impossible for us to know the weight as it has been fitted up in the frames. And we make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true.

Solemnly declared at Nantgwnlle this 27 day of June 1839 before me... I, David Jones, the Surveyor who superintended the work at Nantcwnlle in the Parish of Llancwnlle do hereby certify that the quantity of materials enumerated in the above declaration were actually used therein. Dated the 27day of June 1839. DAVID JONES.

Memorandum of a contract made this 13 th day of February, 1838, between the inhabitants of the parish of Nantcwnlle and Benjamin Morgan and Thos. Jones, Carpenters, who promise and engage to ceil and pew the Parish Church of Nantcwnlle, according to the plan and specification made by David Jones, of Dolebach, this day exhibited, the work to be finished by the beginning of July next, to be approved of by the said David Jones. The parishioners promise to pay the said contractors five pounds when they go to purchase the timber, and to pay a further sum of fifteen pounds when the contractors pay for the timber; another five pounds about the beginning of May next, and the remainder of the above mentioned sum when the work is finished and approved by the said David Jones. In witness whereof our names are here set the day and year first above written “. (From Rev. Evan

*Edwardes's History of Nantcwnlle Parish, published in the Cambrian News 1930)*

- 4.4 An inspection of the early tithe map of the parish of Nant Cwnlle dated 1840, shows that at this time the church was without the later Nave extension at the west end and there appears to have been an entrance at this end as well, implying that access to the church was gained from the west at some time before the later Nave extension in 1887. However this interpretation does not seem to tie in with the pre 1886 drawing reproduced in the 1915 Archaeologia Cambrensis article written by Evans. This may imply that a porch at the west end may have pre-dated this original photograph.
- 4.5 Another interesting feature from the early Ordnance Survey maps is the continual changing of the church's name, very likely due to the continually changing vicars of the church. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century the church was known as Nant Cwnlle. In 1891 the church is known as St. Cynllo but in 1906 the church is then known as St. Gwynllen

## **5. Results of Watching Brief (see Figures 1-34)**

- 5.1 The watching brief element of the work entailed the archaeological supervision of six separate areas of proposed ground work. These included,
- i) top soil strip of the main access track to the graveyard and the chapel.
  - ii) top soil strip of the proposed car parking area.
  - iii) cutting for service trenches (water and foul).
  - iv) trench for septic tank
  - v) trench for soakaway
  - vi) internal floor reduction in Chancel and Vestry parts of chapel.
- 5.2 The results from each of these six elements will be described in the order listed above. All numbers in () refer to context numbers given to specific archaeological features and deposits encountered throughout the work. As well as in the following text, a brief description of each context has also been included on each figure and a further list is also given in the Context Register (Appendix IV). All contexts encountered start at (100).

### **Car Park Area and Access Track (see Figs 3, 4, 5, 6 and 22 and 23)**

- 5.3 In order to give clear access to the graveyard and church for the proposed groundwork, initially the access track needed to be cleared of all vegetation and re-surfaced. The stone entrance gate also had to be partly dismantled to allow wider clearance for subsequent ground working equipment. Once the entrance gate had been dismantled a mechanical excavator using a 1 meter wide bucket stripped back the overburden (100) along the entire length of the access track. This overburden averaged a depth of approximately 0.15m. The soil strip of this area exposed, approximately 6 meters east of the entrance gate, the remains of an old stone culvert complete (110) with fairly capping stones, the largest averaging approximately 0.40m x 0.30m in size. The culvert appeared to have once diverted water from the natural spring in the adjacent meadow next to the Old Sunday School House, which had since become partly blocked thus causing water to flood across the track. The channel for the 0.10m wide culvert cut across the track and appeared to continue under the field wall on the southern side of the track and then continued into the small brook that follows the boundary of the graveyard enclosure wall to the south. Once this feature had been recorded the ground clearance continued further toward the entrance gate, where gathered spoil was heaped into the stone lined well (???) positioned across the threshold to the graveyard enclosure, thereby bridging the feature and preserving it in situ.
- 5.4 No dateable artefacts or deposits were encountered in this area apart from the stone culvert itself, which likely dates to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century judging from its build type and use of large stone fabric.

- 5.5 Once the access track had been cleared the groundwork began on the area of the proposed car park at the east end of the chapel. Prior to the groundwork this area was fairly flat and grass covered with a fairly young yew tree at the west end of the area by the entrance to the vestry which had to be removed. The top soil strip, which averaged a depth of 0.20m, exposed a large stone slab (102) positioned alongside the *well* at its west end inside the graveyard enclosure. This slab appeared to have been deliberately positioned at the edge of the *well*, as if its purpose had been as a stone on which to kneel in order to collect water from the well. Once the stone slab had been recorded the ground work continued to the west. The stone slab (102) was not removed and has subsequently been covered over and is thus preserved in situ next to the *well* in its original position.
- 5.6 No other significant features or deposits were encountered during the groundwork of this area, apart from a series of three small drainage channels, each approx. 0.20m in width x 0.20m in depth. Two of these channels were orientated east to southwest and appeared to source again from the area of the adjacent meadow in the area of the natural spring by the Old Sunday School. The third channel was a soakway running from a rain water downpipe from the corner of the vestry building. Each of these channels intersected with each other and appeared to continue to the southern part of the graveyard.
- 5.7 Finds recovered from the soil stripping of this area included two disarticulated skull fragments of human bone in the area of the removed yew tree bowl (103) and a further disarticulated human bone fragment in the area by the vestry. Neither of these bone fragments appeared to be demarcating the position of an unknown burial but appeared to be purely disarticulated remains scattered randomly within the top soil and the stony sub soil (101) of the yew tree bowl.
- 5.8 Other dateable finds included one small fragment of 18<sup>th</sup> century slipware and a small fragment of coarse mottled green glaze, likely 17<sup>th</sup> century in date.

**Septic Tank** (see Figs 5 and 26)

- 5.9 The cutting for the septic tank trench was to measure approximately 2m x 2m x 2m in depth. It was undertaken using a mechanical excavator with a 1.5 meter wide grading bucket. This trench was dug within a heavily water-logged area approximately 5 meters south of the proposed car parking area.
- 5.10 Initially the top soil was removed (100) to a depth of approximately 0.20m. Once the underlying wet mid brown/grey stony soil deposit (101) was fully exposed, its surface was investigated for any potential archaeological features and finds. None were found apart from the cut for a recent drainage cut. Digging of the trench continued cautiously in case potential unknown burials became exposed. Once this deposit had been removed to a depth of approximately 0.30m, a light grey clay deposit became exposed which appeared to be a natural deposit (107). This stratigraphic layer averaged a depth of approximately 0.30m. Below this was a natural light grey clay inter-mixed with a grey shale (108), again approximately 0.30m in depth. Below this was a continuation layer of natural shale bedrock (109), which continued to the bottom of the trench to a depth of approximately 2 meters.
- 5.11 No significant features or dateable finds were recovered from this trench.

**Service Trenches** (see Figs 5, 25 and 27)

- 5.12 In total, there were three service trenches excavated, the mains water, which was to run from the top of the access track and continue down the track and onwards to the rear west facing area of the Nave, following the position of the 19<sup>th</sup> century pathway running parallel to the south facing elevation of the Nave. The other two service trenches included the 'foul' drain, which ran parallel to the mains water trench from the rear of the Nave and continued east toward the septic tank, and the soakaway trench, which ran from the septic tank and around the inner circumference of the graveyard enclosure to the south.

*Service trench (water)*

- 5.13 The mains water trench within the area of the access track and the car park area exposed no significant features or deposits. However within the area immediately south of the Vestry building, several fragments of disarticulated human remains were recovered, seeming at first to imply the possible position of a previously unknown burial, however closer inspection of the exposed south and north facing sections revealed no evidence for any burial in this area nor any further bone fragments. Continued cutting of this trench to the west exposed a series of large stones that cut across the trench in a north-south direction and consisted of large irregular shaped stones, each approximately 0.40m x 0.30m in size and each approximately 0.20m in depth (132). Inspection of this feature gave no indication as to its function, whether it was a dry stone built feature, the edge of a stone lined burial or else just a stone pile. As only part of it was exposed within the trench, its position was recorded and partial excavation was undertaken in order to ascertain its full character, extent, form and purpose, however due to the limits of the size of the trench a conclusive interpretation of the feature was impossible. Once recorded the stones were carefully removed in order to satisfy the regulatory depth required for the service trench, a depth of approximately 0.60m. Once removed no further evidence as to the features purpose became apparent, which in itself may imply that the feature is a length of a low dry stone wall, however this would seem unlikely considering its position close to the church.

*Service trench (foul)*

- 5.14 The trench for the foul drain ran parallel to the water, however the western end was cut into a raised platform area between the Vestry and the Porch in order that no burials became exposed. For the cutting of this trench no significant deposits or features became exposed and no further disarticulated remains were recovered.

**Soakaway**

- 5.15 The soakaway trench was to run from the area of the septic tank and follow the inner side of the cemetery enclosure wall to the south, whereupon the water was to drain back into the soil at the southern end of the cemetery. The ground for the cutting of this trench was heavily water-logged across its entire length, the ground in this area having been made continually wet marsh land from the natural spring in the area of the old school house. No significant deposits or features were noted or recovered from the cutting of this trench. This said however supervision of this groundwork was extremely hard considering the water logged conditions of the soil.

**Floor Reduction in Chancel and Vestry (see Figs 28 - 33)**

*The Chancel*

- 5.16 The groundwork within the chancel and vestry of the chapel involved the reduction of the floor levels in order to install under-floor heating as well as to create a one level floor and to allow easier access into the chapel from the vestry entrance. The chancel area measured 5.5m x 8m (18 feet x 25 feet).
- 5.17 The Chancel prior to the groundwork commencing consisted of a series of three separate stepped levels or tiers, each higher than the last, the highest holding the altar at the far east end of the chapel. Each of these tiers was constructed from a raft of concrete held in place by a line of dressed stones at the front. The surface concrete had originally been covered in decorative late 19<sup>th</sup> orange, cream and black floral patterned terracotta tiles, each approximately 4 inch square. Prior to the floor reductions the greater part of these tiles had already been removed in view of re-using them following the work on the chapel.
- 5.18 For the purpose of installing the under-floor heating, all of the raised concrete floor had to be removed

and the underlying deposit reduced by between 0.10-0.15m below the floor level of the Nave area. This was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a 1 meter wide grading bucket and hand shovel where required. This groundwork was undertaken under strict watching brief conditions should any disarticulated or articulated bones from undisturbed burials become exposed.

- 5.19 Once all of the concrete had been removed (111) the underlying deposit became exposed. The make-up of this deposit varied across the entire floor area. Predominantly this deposit appeared to be a fill used to bulk up the level of the underlying ground surface for the creation of the raised tiers. At the far west end this fill deposit was made up of river gravel (112) and at the southern side and in the central area this fill consisted of a mixture of soil, gravel, charcoal inclusions (2%) and plasterwork (113), which appeared to be the same plaster used in the skimming of the internal walls in the Chancel. This implied that the concrete raised floor had been constructed after the plastering of the internal walls at the time of the churches refurbishment in 1887. At the far east end of the chancel the underlying fill was much shallower than at the western end, being only approximately 0.08m in depth above a further underlying deposit (116).
- 5.20 Careful removal of this fill by manual shovelling to the required depth for the development managed to recover a significant amount of disarticulated human bones (approximately 15kg) in the west and central area of the Chancel, which included femurs and skull fragments. At the far east end the removal of the fill (112) and the cutting into the underlying charcoal filled (2%) deposit (113) exposed the remains of a heavily disturbed burial with only partially disarticulated remains (114). This burial appeared to have been moved at some time in the past and as such instead of it lying in an east-west orientation as one would have expected, the burial appeared to have been disturbed to the point where most of the bones were scattered in a north-south direction, with only part of the skull, ribs, pelvis and thigh bones being present. Careful excavation of the immediate area surrounding these remains managed to recover several finger bones approximately 1 meter south of the burial, further implying that the burial had been heavily disturbed at some time. Careful cleaning back of the exposed west facing section in the east wall of the chancel revealed the line of a shallow cut (122) with a fill of soil intermixed with a deteriorated organic matter, which gave the impression of a possible grave cut (122), which appeared to be in the approximate correct position for the exposed remaining skull and upper rib fragments of the exposed burial. This further reinforced the interpretation that the burial had been heavily disturbed at some time, possibly during the construction of the chancel extension to the church, which likely occurred at some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. If this interpretation is correct it may have been the case, that during the construction of the east wall of the chancel, the builders involved came across the shallow burial and because it was in their way, the remains were shifted over in order to not desecrate the grave directly. This could explain why the lower leg bones and feet are missing. Following recording of this partial burial the partially disarticulated remains were then lifted, bagged and labelled ready for reburial. The reduction of the ground surface then continued in this area with no further features or deposits becoming exposed.
- 5.21 Immediately south of this burial in the corner of the chancel, immediately below the *Credence*, the ground reduction exposed a further grave (115) outlined by a cut as well as a covering of irregular medium sized flat stones, each approximately 0.30m in size. At the far east end of this *cairn* burial a white quartz stone had been positioned at the far east end, approximately 0.20m x 0.10m in size, as if marking the position of the head of the deceased. This implied that the burial was aligned west to east with the head at the east end and not at the west end, as would normally be the case in Christian burial practices. As such, this burial may well be the position of a former preacher or vicar of Nant Cwnlle church who was buried facing the opposite direction from his congregation. Because of its position below the *Credence* and nestled in the far south eastern corner of the chancel, this burial likely post dates the construction of the chancel and obviously pre dates the 1887 refurbishment, which would mean that this burial is likely either 18<sup>th</sup> or else early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.
- 5.22 Following a re-assessment of the depth of the floor reduction, it was decided, instead of disturbing this burial, which would have meant full excavation, the depth of the floor reduction was raised significantly to a height where only the covering stones needed to be removed. Having recorded the position of these

covering stones, this was then undertaken, thus leaving the burial still in place preserved in situ.

- 5.23 Once the floor reductions had been completed to the required depth, a small shallow cut approximately 1m x 0.70m was made in the ground surface (118) at the far south-west end for a concrete base to support the proposed stair case that was to lead up to the proposed upper floor. The depth of this cut was only to be approximately 0.20m in depth. As burials had already been exposed at the far east end of the chancel, this ground work proceeded very cautiously. Following the removal of a deposit consisting of a mid brown soil intermixed with plasterwork (128), a further compact lens deposit became exposed, only approximately 4mm in depth (129). Once this deposit was cut through a series of irregular shaped flat slate stones, each approximately 0.20m x 0.15m in size became exposed. These stones appeared to have been positioned in a line each side of the cut trench as if marking the edge of a grave (131). Digging for this trench was halted and the position of these stones was recorded. Following this, the stones were lifted along with what appeared to be a fill deposit and articulated human bones became partially exposed. This being the case, the cutting for this trench was halted at this depth and the remains were covered over, thus preserved in situ, and the depth of the trench was reduced to a satisfactory level.
- 5.24 Very few finds were recovered from the floor reduction in the Chancel. What finds there were however, apart from approximately 15kg of disarticulated human remains, all of which were reburied on site, were three iron nails, two approximately 30mm in length and one approximately 10mm in length, an iron door bracket and one piece of grey slate worked into a heart shape. This was approximately 50mm in diameter and 5mm in thickness. All of these finds were recovered from the fill of the raised concrete floor.

### *The Vestry*

- 5.25 Floor reductions in the Vestry were limited to a depth of approximately 0.20m, following the removal of the wooden block flooring (133). Although no dateable finds or features were recovered from this groundwork, over 20kg of disarticulated human bones were recovered. All of these remains were found within the top 0.20m of soil (134) and all appeared to have been thrown in with a former soil as all were intermixed within a *confused* deposit. Because of this, it would seem likely that these remains were very likely disturbed burials having been reburied following their exposure from the cutting for the foundations of the new Vestry building in 1886/7, in which the ground surface needed to be raised in order to tie it in with the existing floor surface in the chancel.
- 5.25 All of these disarticulated remains were bagged and labelled and then reburied in the agreed position between the Vestry and the Porch.
- 5.26 Following the floor reductions in both the chancel and vestry areas, the exposed floor area was covered in a protective *terram* sheeting and a layer of sand was thrown over for further protection, thus preserving the underlying deposits in situ.

## **6. Investigation of External Elevations**

- 6.1 Because of the nature of the proposed development i.e changing of use into a residential dwelling, it was an important element of the archaeological work, to ensure that all visible notable features within the interior and exterior elevations of the church be recorded prior to any changes. This recording work was undertaken photographically and interpretative notes were taken of all areas that warranted inspection.

### *North Facing elevation*

- 6.2 This elevation is the most significant of all of the church's elevations, as it has construction features visible within its fabric that reveal a fragment of the church's evolution.
- 6.3 At the base of this elevation there is a slight 1m step or batter that has been interpreted as being either part



of the church's earlier foundation or else was a necessary requirement during construction of this elevation. Inspection of the mortars types used in both of these areas seem to imply the latter however, in that both mortar types are identical. However this could mean that the mortars are later re-pointing which gives the impression that the builds are contemporary. Without further investigation in the form of coring however this would be hard to come to any solid conclusion.

- 6.4 The far west end of this elevation, just beyond the buttress and at the north side of the window, the building stone type changes as does the use of mortar.
- 6.5 At the far east end, in the later chancel elevation, there is the remains of a dressed stone, as if from a window mullion, inserted in an upright position, which appears to be marking the beginning of the Chancel extension, that may have occurred at some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Why this stone has been positioned in such a way remains a mystery, but it may have been inserted as a marker.
- 6.6 The only other feature within this elevation was noted within the interior of the church following the removal of a memorial plaque inserted within the plasterwork. After the plaque's removal, a large 0.50m x 0.50m square of stonework became exposed, which appeared to show the remains of an arched window. This feature was photographed (see Plate 48). Unfortunately the feature was not visible within the fabric of the external elevation as its position is concealed behind a stone supporting buttress, so without further investigation of the feature by removing further plasterwork, a firm date and description of this window must remain unknown. However it is very likely that this blocked in window is a reflection of one of the windows depicted in the pre-1886 drawing (see Figure 21).

#### *South facing elevation*

- 6.7 No significant features other than the existing late 19<sup>th</sup> century features, were noted within this elevation.

#### *West facing elevation*

- 6.8 No significant features other than the existing late 19<sup>th</sup> century features, were noted within this elevation.

#### *East facing elevation.*

- 6.9 No significant features other than the existing 19<sup>th</sup> century features, were noted within this elevation.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The watching brief on the groundwork at St. Cynllo, otherwise known as Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan managed to record several significant features. The first of these features is the large stone slab exposed at the entrance during top soil removal for the proposed car park area. This large slab was located alongside a grating that crossed the threshold from the access track to the graveyard. This grating covered a stone lined well, post medieval in date, which was fed by a natural spring from the area by the old school house. This spring very likely served the church and its parishioners from very early times, possibly even as far back as the Iron Age in association with the settlement at Pen-y-gaer hillfort. The exposed stone slab was very likely used by parishioners to kneel down on to collect water from the well because of its healing qualities. This stone slab is still in place beneath the proposed new car park surface thus preserved in situ.
- 7.2 Other than this interesting feature, no further significant features or deposits were exposed during ground work for the service trenches and the septic tank in the churchyard, other than several fragments of disarticulated human bones.
- 7.3 The ground reduction in the Chancel and Vestry area of the interior of the church recovered a fairly large amount of disarticulated human bones, which have since been reburied in the churchyard. Also exposed in

the Chancel were the positions of two graves, both left preserved in situ. One of these burials appeared to have been deliberately positioned beneath the area of the *credence* and was aligned with its head end at the east and not the west, implying that the burial was likely that of a former preacher associated with the church itself. The date of this grave and the identity of the deceased sadly must remain unknown, however if this section of chancel was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, then it is very likely that the grave is contemporary. This being the case, the grave could be one of two preachers, either John Rowland who died in 1760, or else the grave of William Grey Hughes who died in 1824.

- 7.4 The other grave became partially exposed during the cutting for a small trench for a concrete support base for a stair well. Here only a series of three stones lining the sides of a potential grave with two articulated bones became partly exposed, thereby marking a graves position. As such excavation was halted at this depth and the grave was recovered over and the remains preserved in situ.
- 7.4 A further part burial was also exposed beneath the far Chancel east window, which was partially disarticulated. These remains appeared to have been very heavily disturbed at some time, likely when the chancel extension was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The date of these remains must remain uncertain, however what is certain is that they pre-date the foundations of the chancel area of the chancel.
- 7.5 Unfortunately no dateable finds were recovered from any of the groundworks in the car park area or in the chancel and vestry area earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 7.6 The desk based assessment and the investigation of the external and exposed parts of internal fabric of the church has shown that the standing fabric is actually of three phases. The earliest standing fabric appears to be the central Nave area, which is likely 18<sup>th</sup> century in date. Following this the present chancel was built as an extension, likely at some time in either the late 18<sup>th</sup> century or else the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following this the Nave was extended further to the west in the 1886/7 restoration.
- 7.7 From investigation of the early maps and through site inspection, it is readily apparent that the original churchyard enclosure was more oval than it is today. It would seem that following the construction of the old Sunday school in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the eastern area of the churchyard enclosure, the area of the natural spring, was given over to the Sunday School and as such the meaning and identity of the original spring fell into disuse.

## 8. Acknowledgements

Thanks to; Mr N Topham owner of Nant Cwnlle Church for allowing access to the church and graveyard during the groundwork. Thanks also to architect Robert Handley of Archispec and David Davies contractor for their patience during the ground work and archaeological recording work. Also thanks to Charles Hill and Zoe Bevans-Rice at Dyfed Archaeological Trust for their help and advice with the research.

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Tithe Map of the parish of Nantcwnlle 1843 (NLW)

Ordnance Survey First Edition 1:10560 maps 1881

Ordnance Survey Second Edition 1:10560 maps 1906



## **APPENDIX I:** Figs & Illustrations

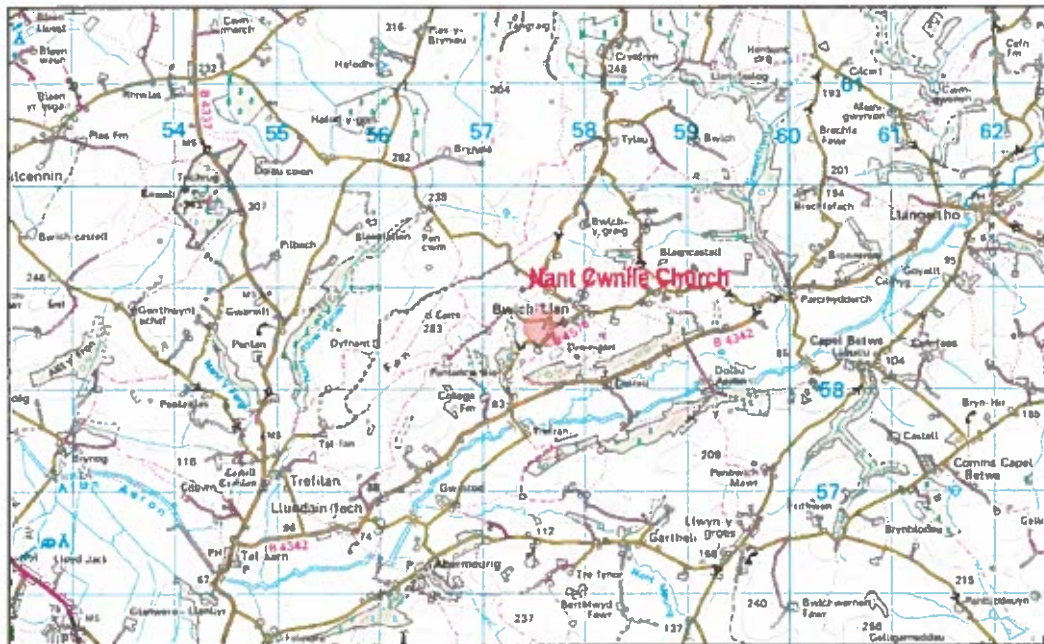


Figure 1. Location map showing location of Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion.  
(OS 1:50000 map)

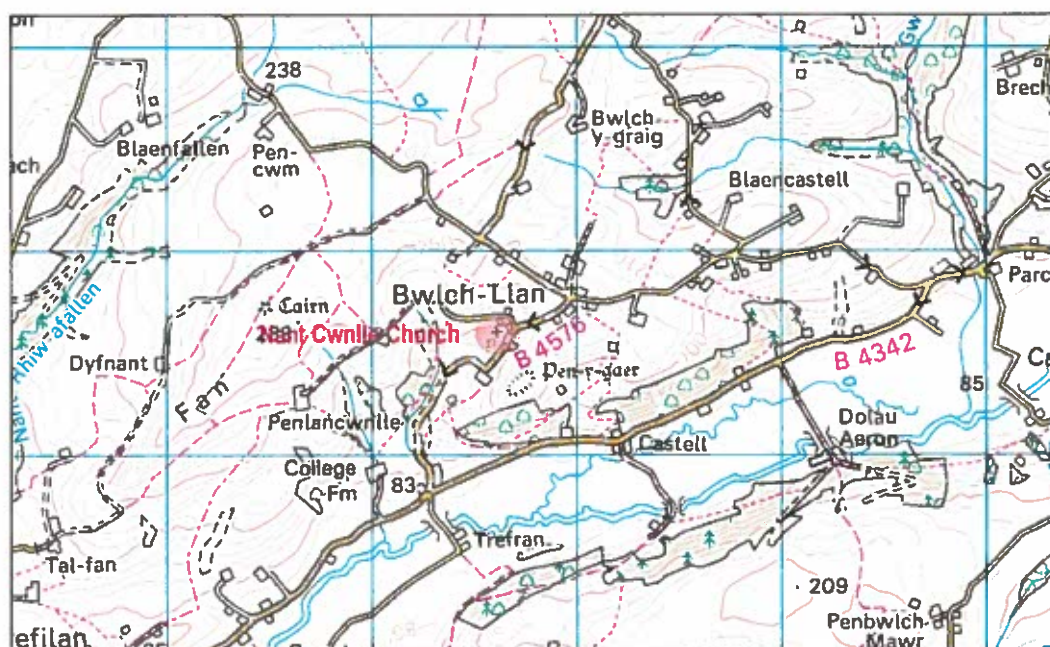


Figure 2. Enlarged view of location map showing location of Nant Cwnlle Chapel, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion.  
(OS 1:50000 map)

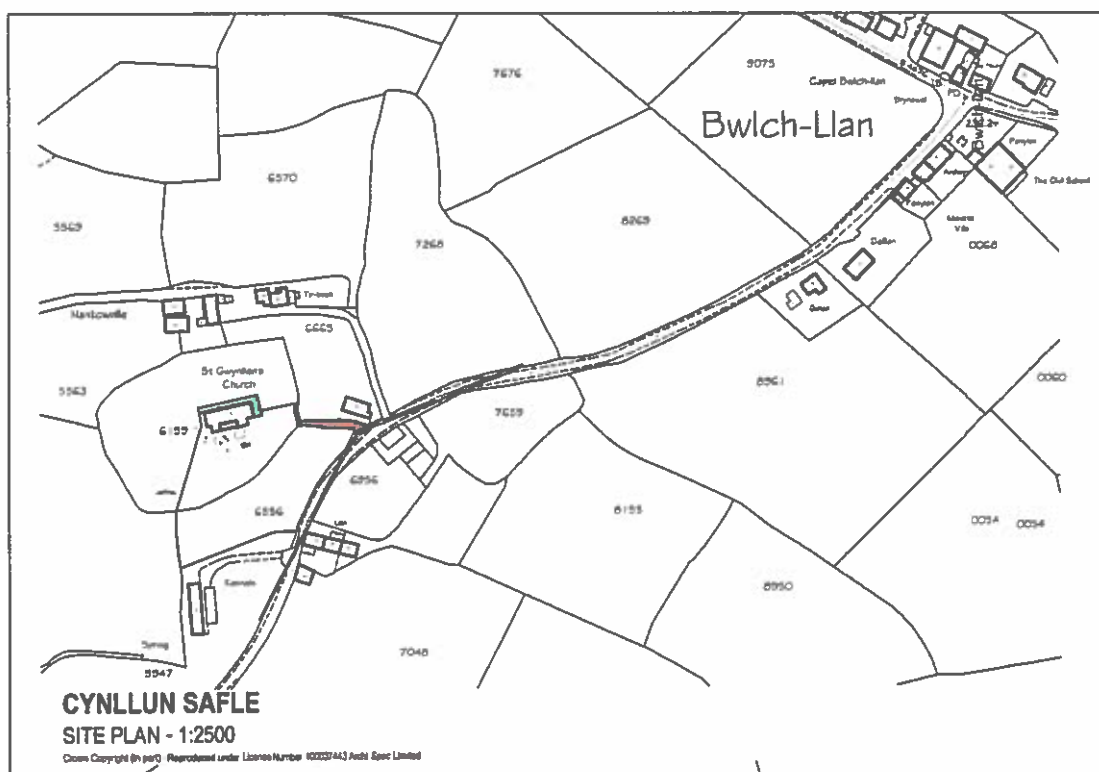


Figure 3. Site plan of Nant Cwnlle Chapel, otherwise known as St. Gwynllen's Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion. (OS 1:2500 map)

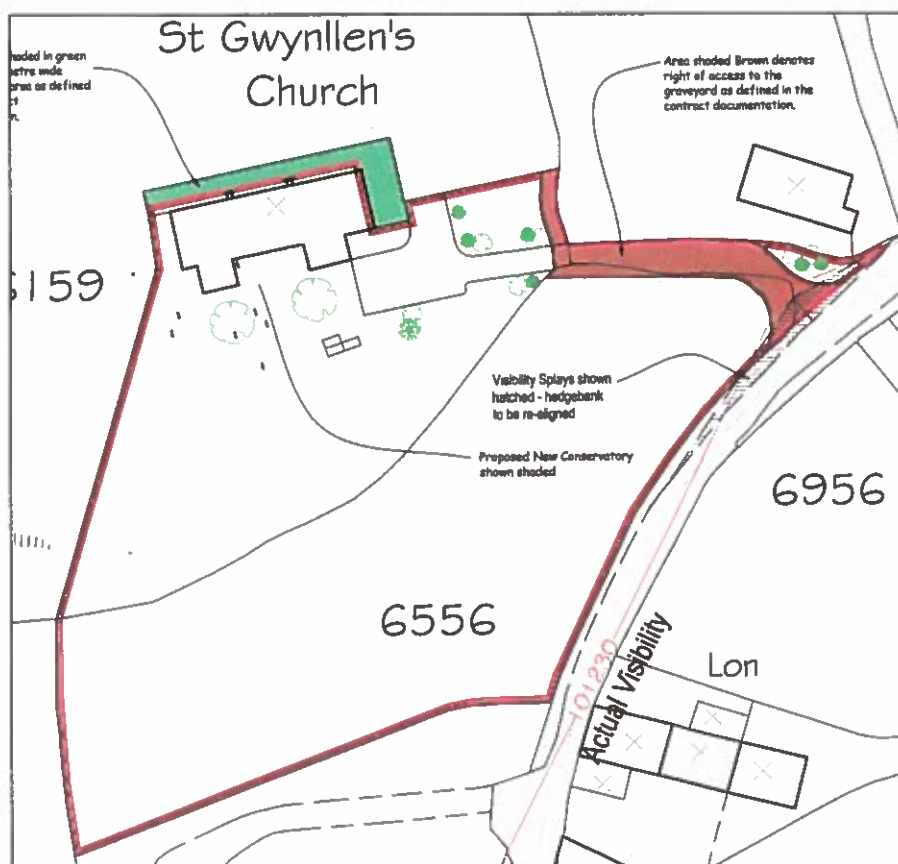
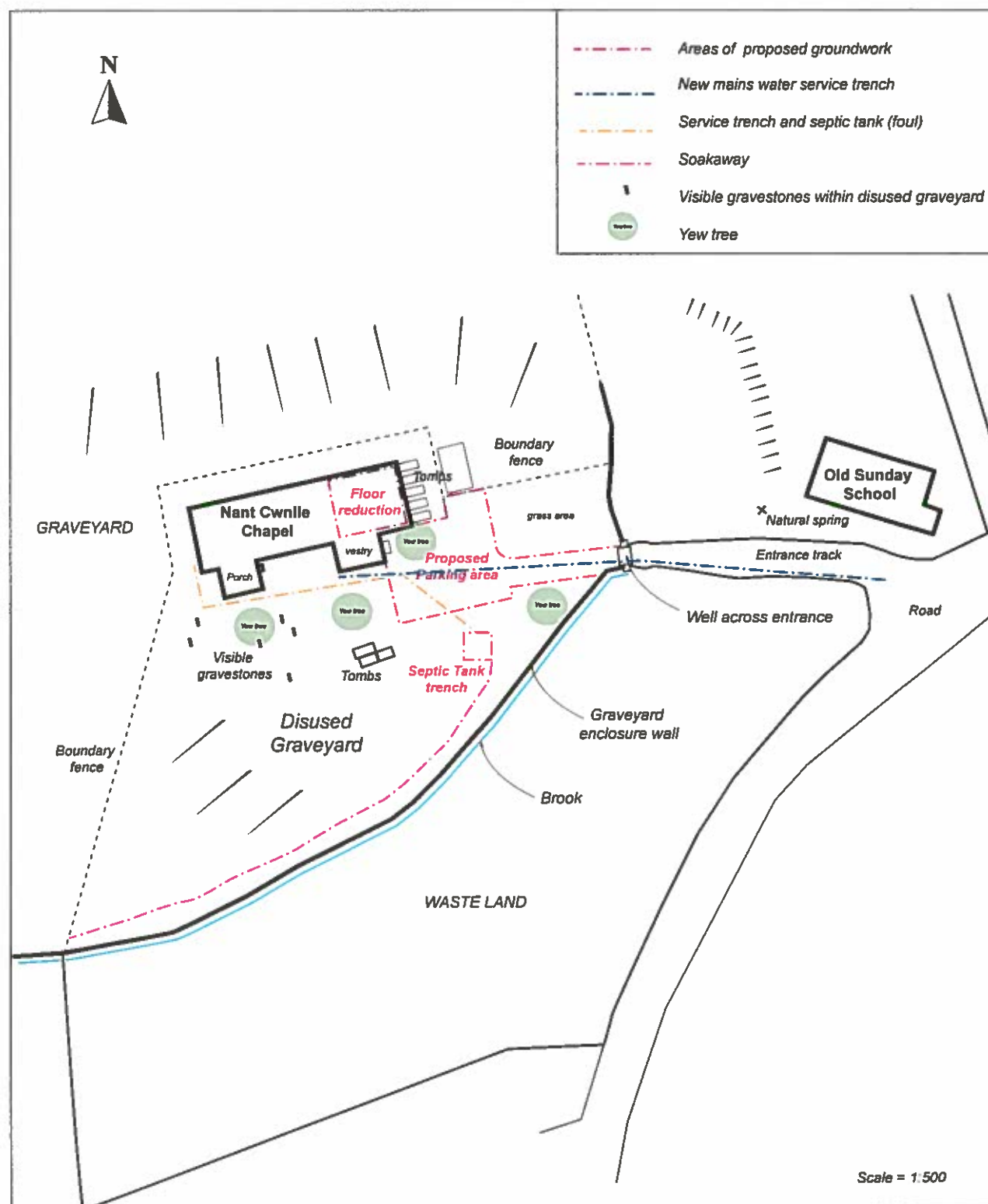


Figure 4. Proposed site plan of Nant Cwnlle Chapel, otherwise known as St. Gwynllen's Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion. (OS 1:500 map)





**Figure 5.** Site plan showing areas of proposed groundwork and floor reduction in Chancel area of chapel.



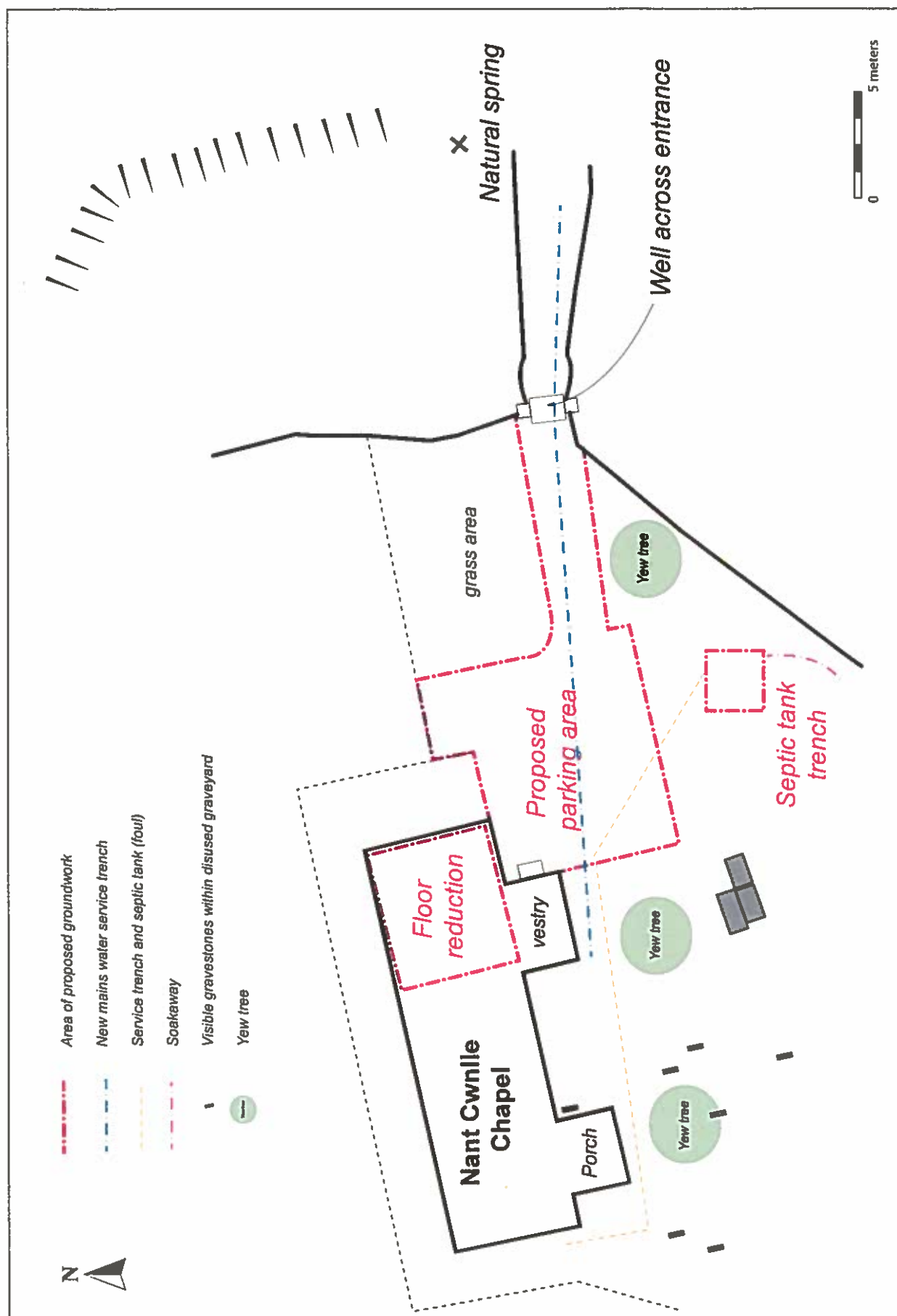


Figure 6. Site plan showing location of groundwork being undertaken.

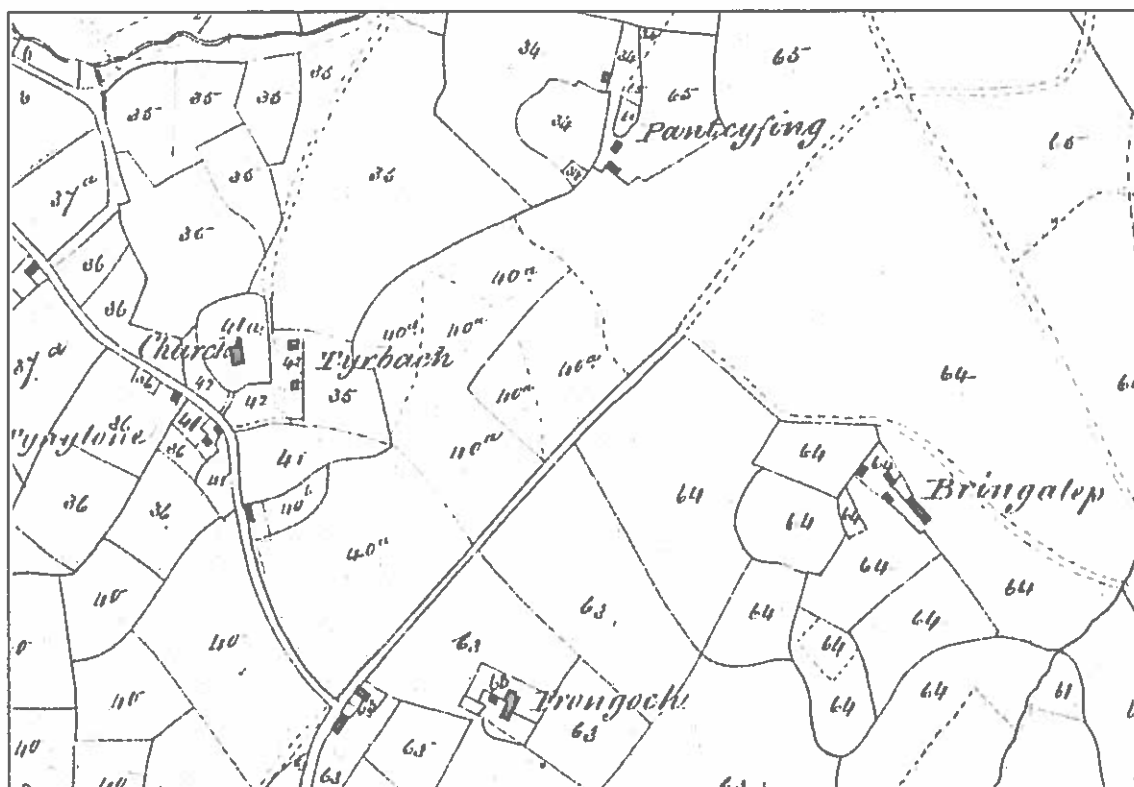


Figure 7. Portion of Tithe Map of 1840 for Nant Cwnlle parish. Church and graveyard located to the left.

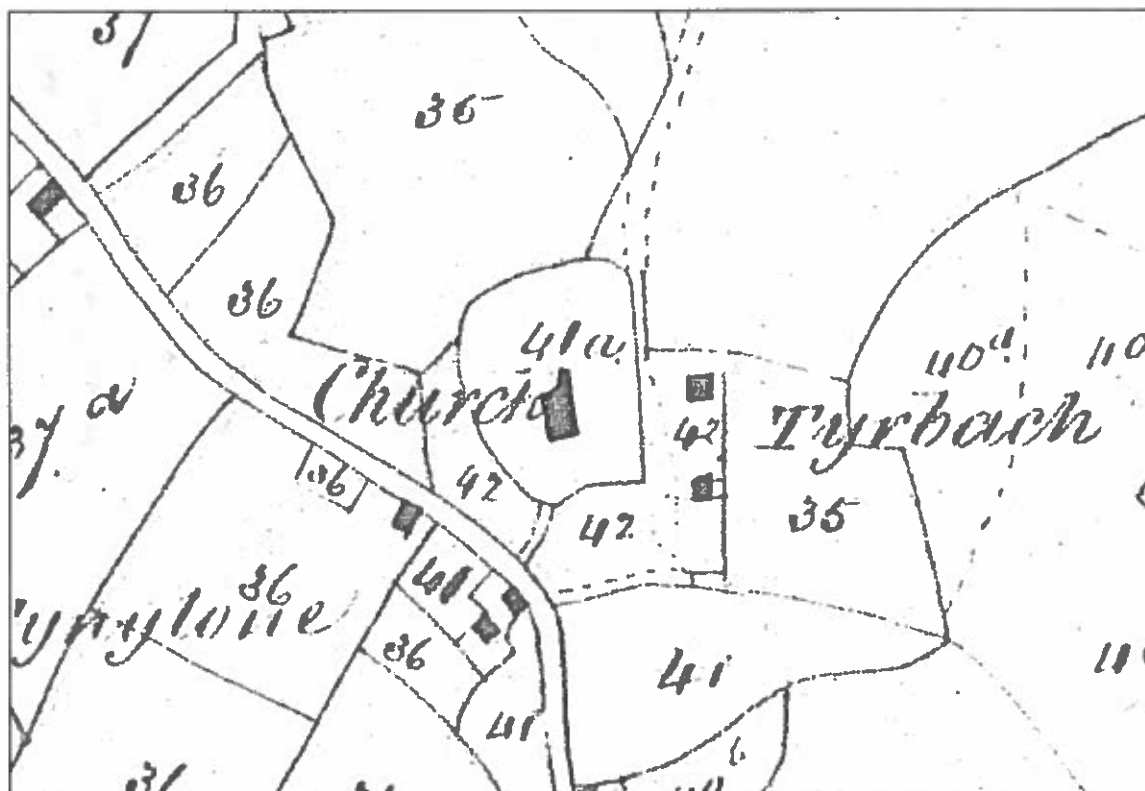


Figure 8. Enlarged view of portion of tithe map of 1840 showing Nant cwnlle church and graveyard.

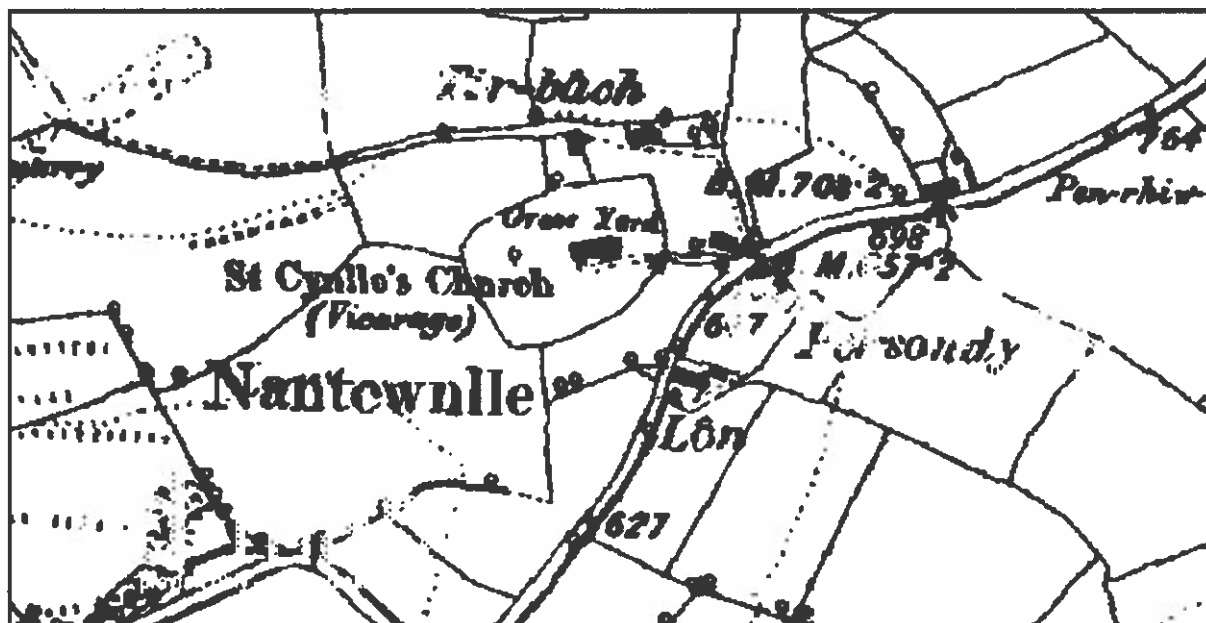


Figure 9. Portion of Ordnance Survey map of 1891 showing Nant Cwnlle Church, then known as St. Cynllo's Church.

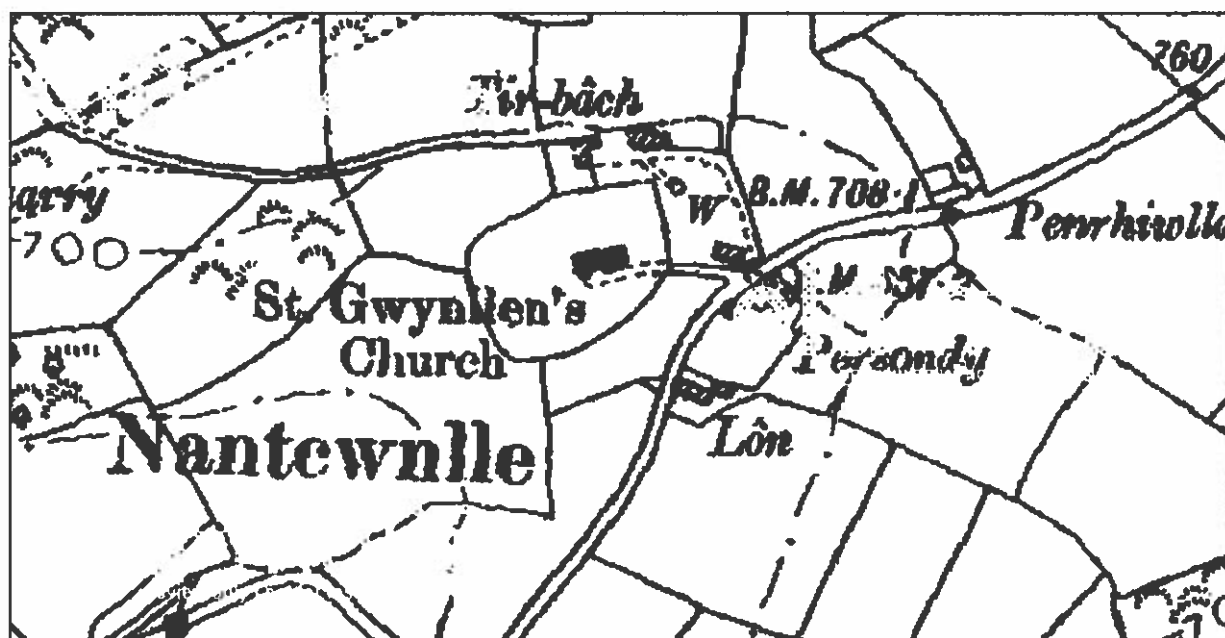


Figure 10. Portion of Ordnance Survey map of 1906 showing Nant Cwnlle Church, then known as St. Gwynllen's Church.

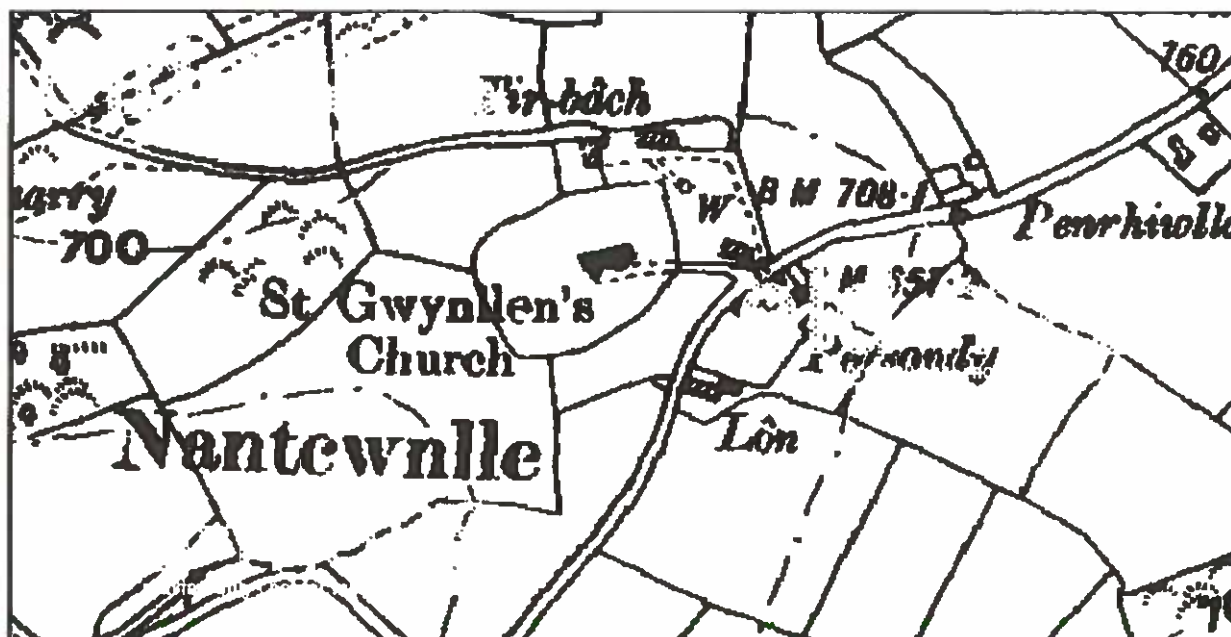
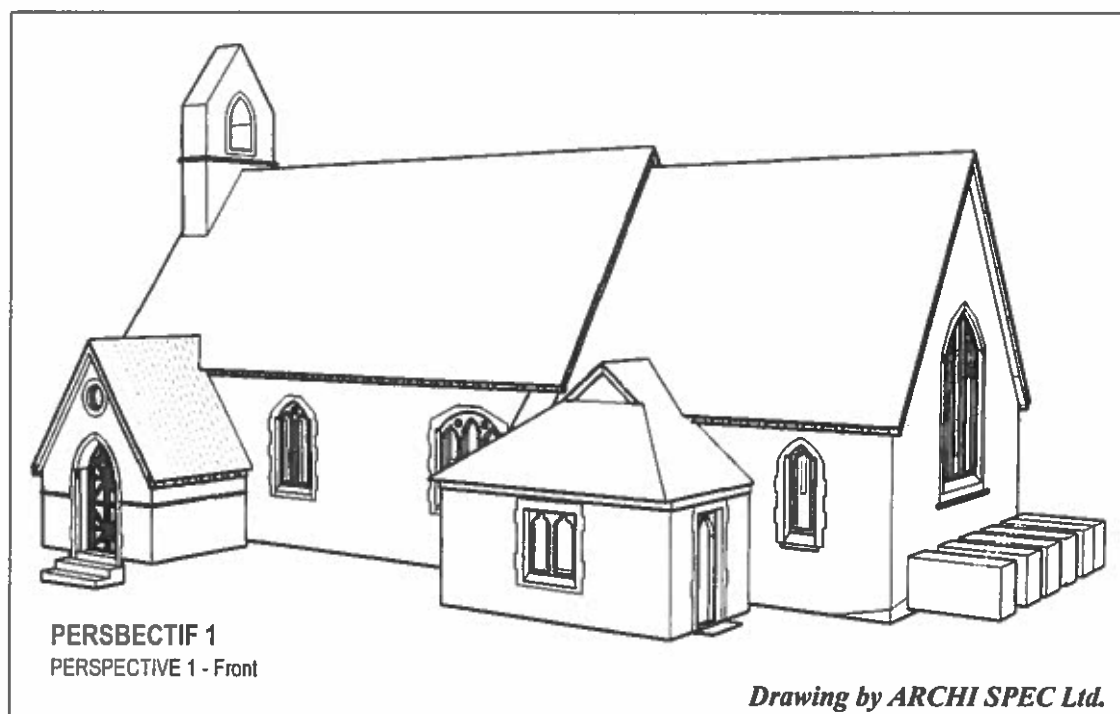


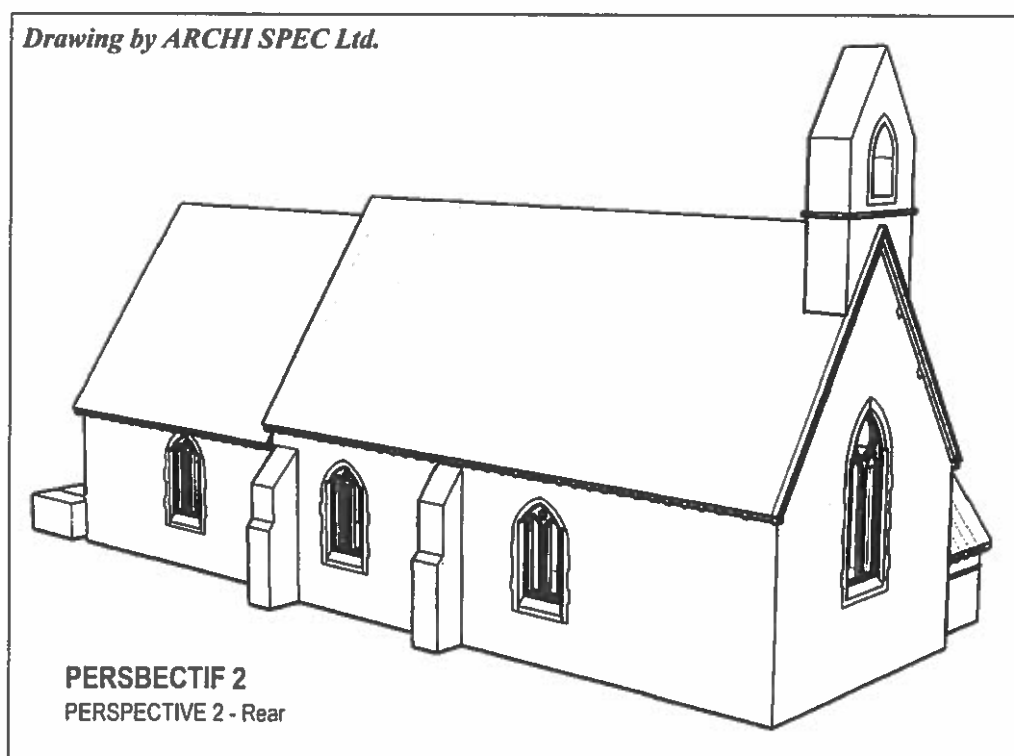
Figure 11. Portion of Ordnance Survey map of 1953 showing Nant Cwnlle Church, then known as St. Gwynllen's Church.



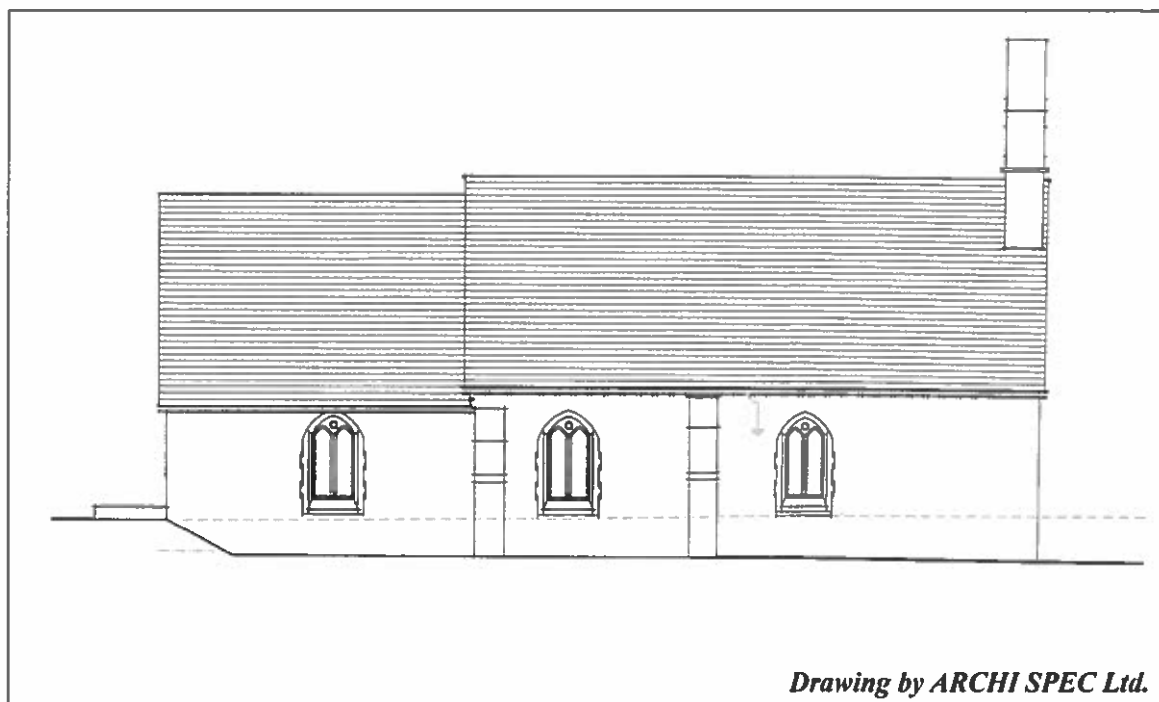
Figure 12. Aerial photo of Nant Cwnlle Church (2005).



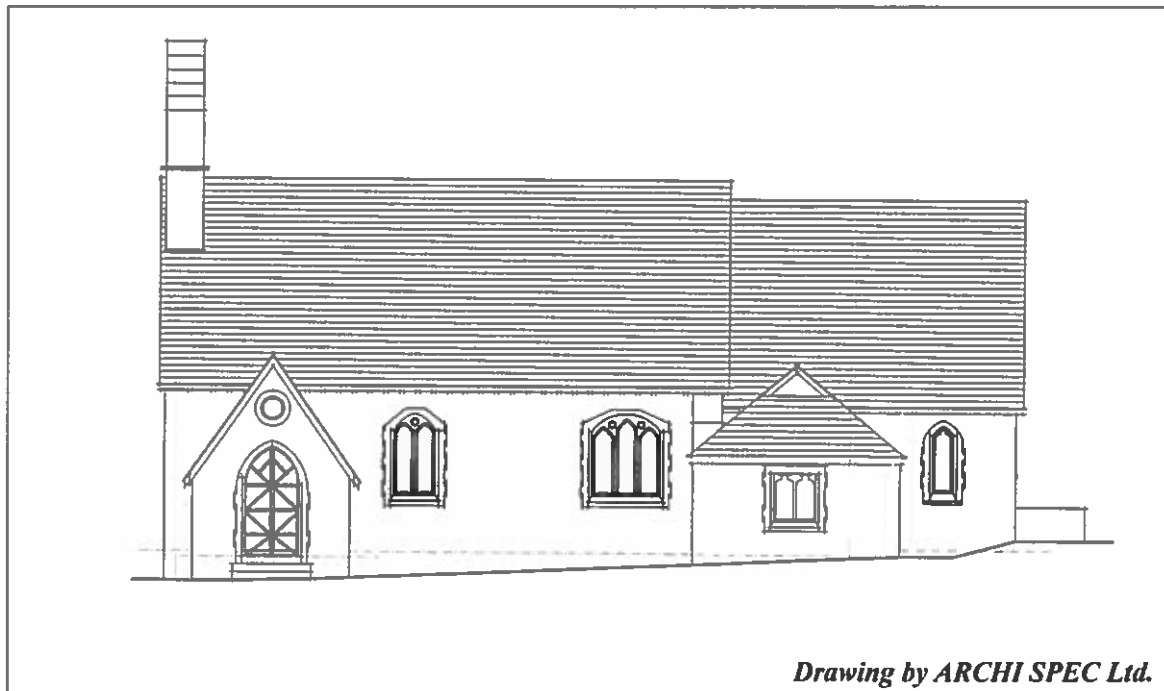
**Figure 13.** Architects oblique drawing of Nant Cwnlle Chapel. Looking northwest.



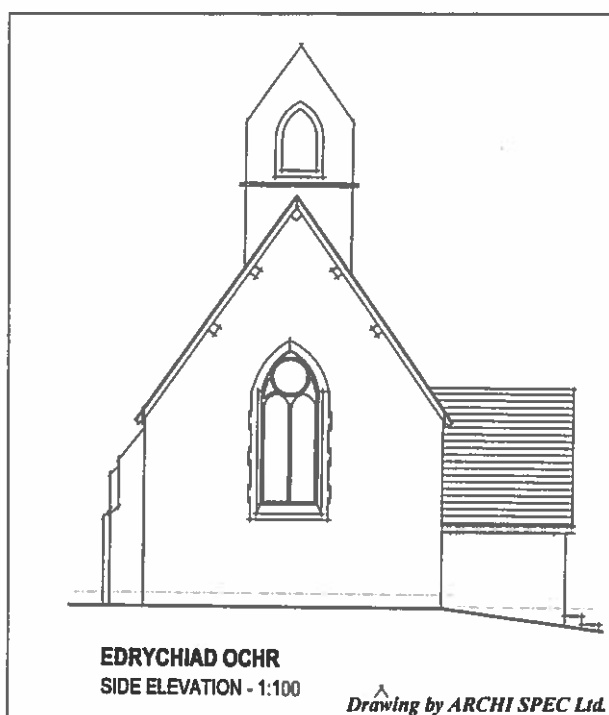
**Figure 14.** Architects oblique drawing of Nant Cwnlle Chapel. Looking southeast.



**Figure 15.** Architects drawing of north facing elevation of Nant Cwnlle Chapel.



**Figure 16.** Architects drawing of south facing elevation of Nant Cwnlle Chapel.



**Figure 16.** Architects drawing of west facing elevation of Nant Cwnlle Chapel.



**Figure 17.** Architects drawing of east facing elevation of Nant Cwnlle Chapel.

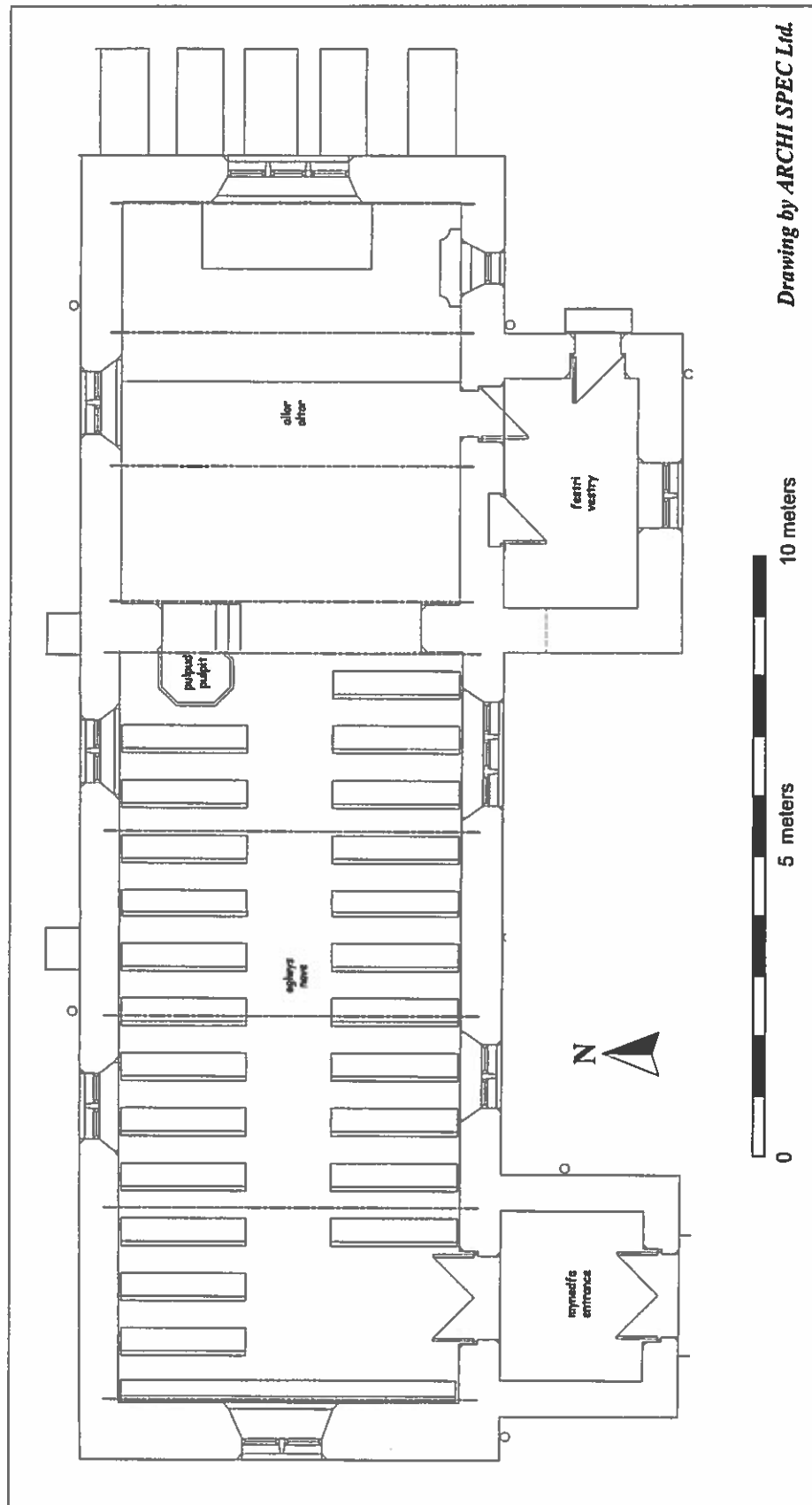


Figure 19. Architects ground plan of Nant Cwnlle Chapel prior to conversion.



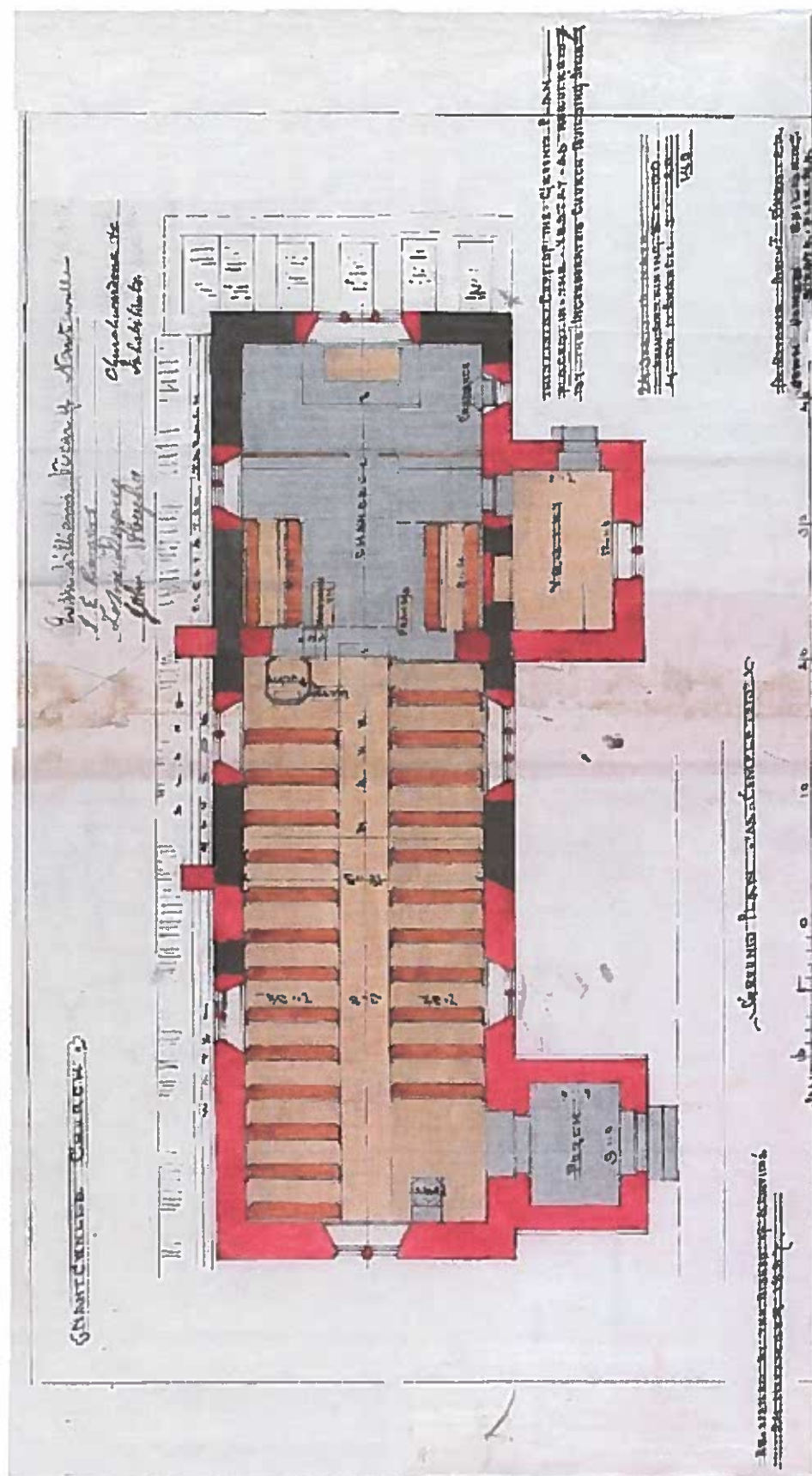


Figure 20. 19th century ground plan of Nant Cwnlle Church, dated 1887.  
(OS 1:50000 map)

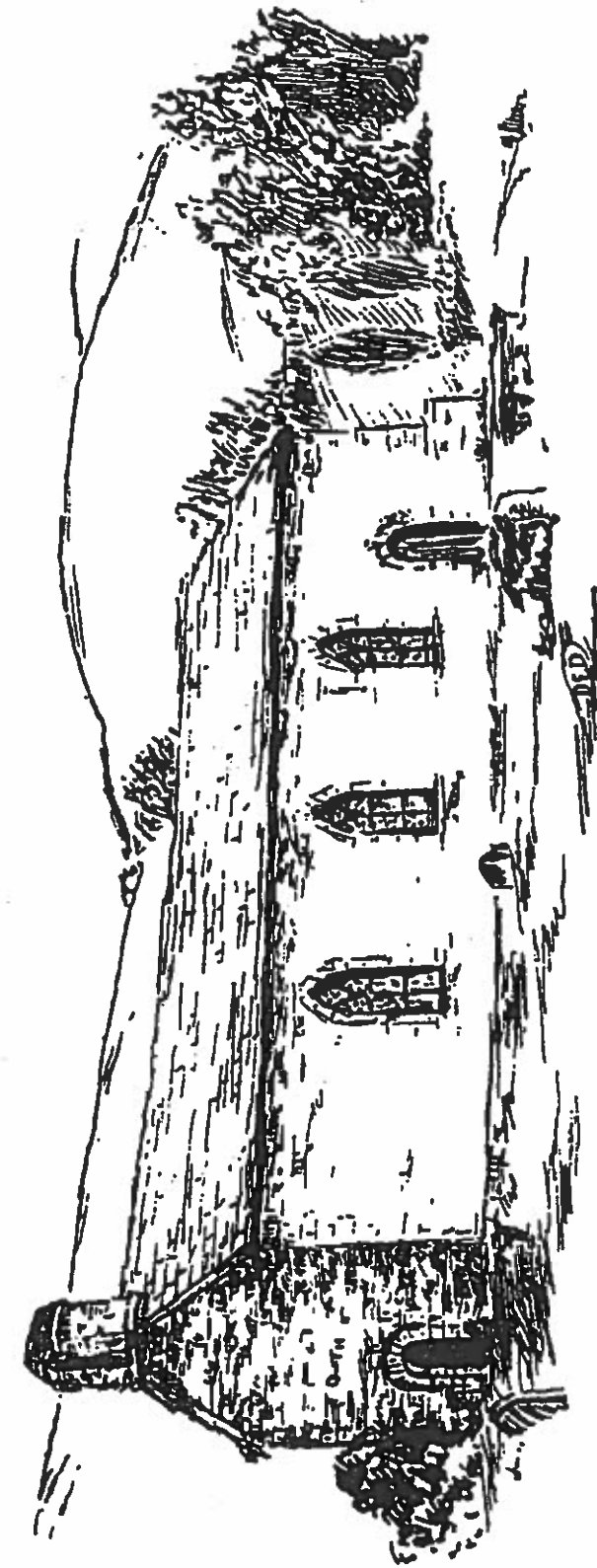


Figure 21. Copy of drawing of Nantcwnlle Church pre-dating 1886/7 restoration. From Cardiganshire Transactions 1915. Shows south facing elevation.

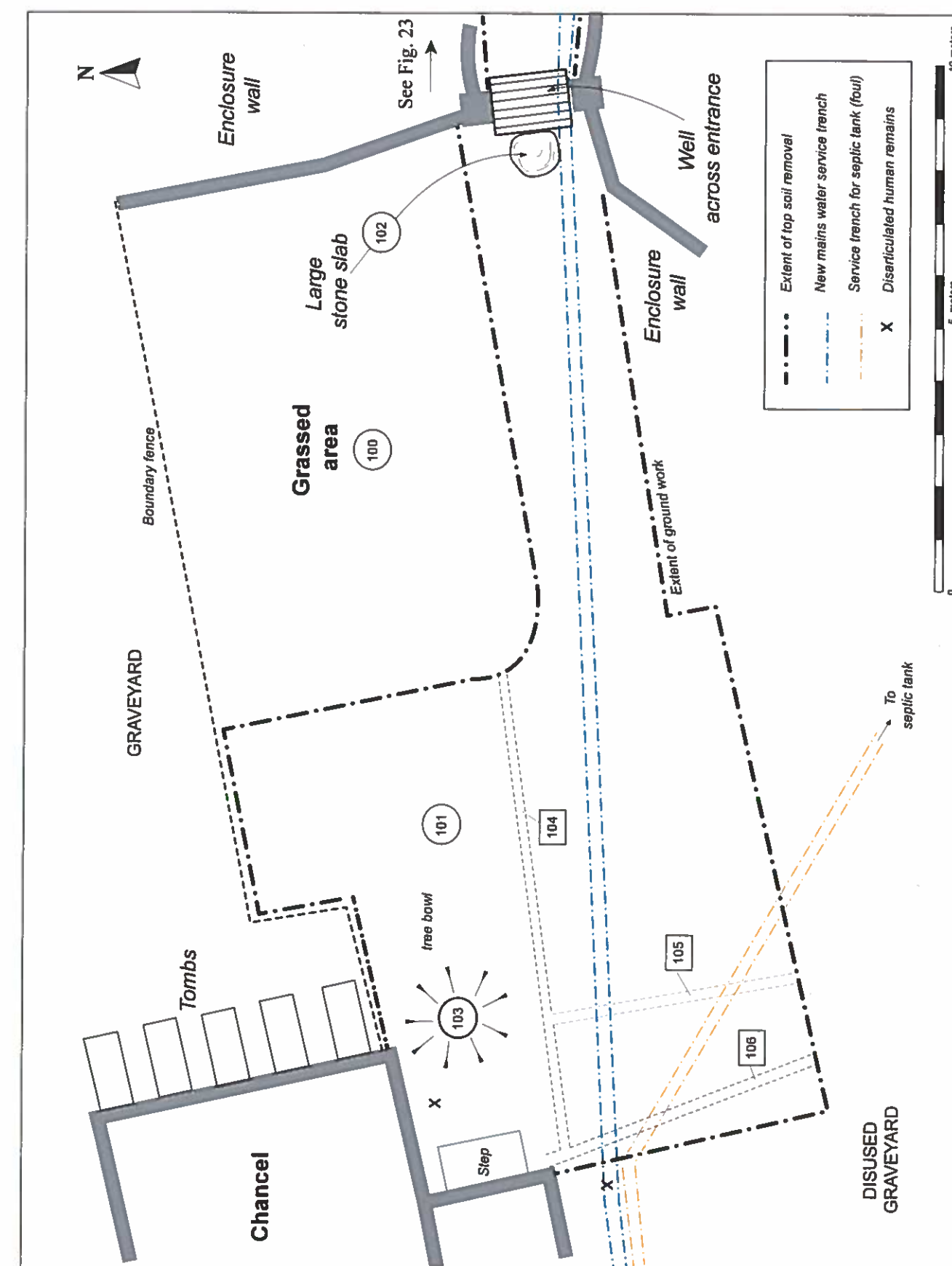


Figure 22. Ground plan of car park area at east end of chapel following removal of top soil.

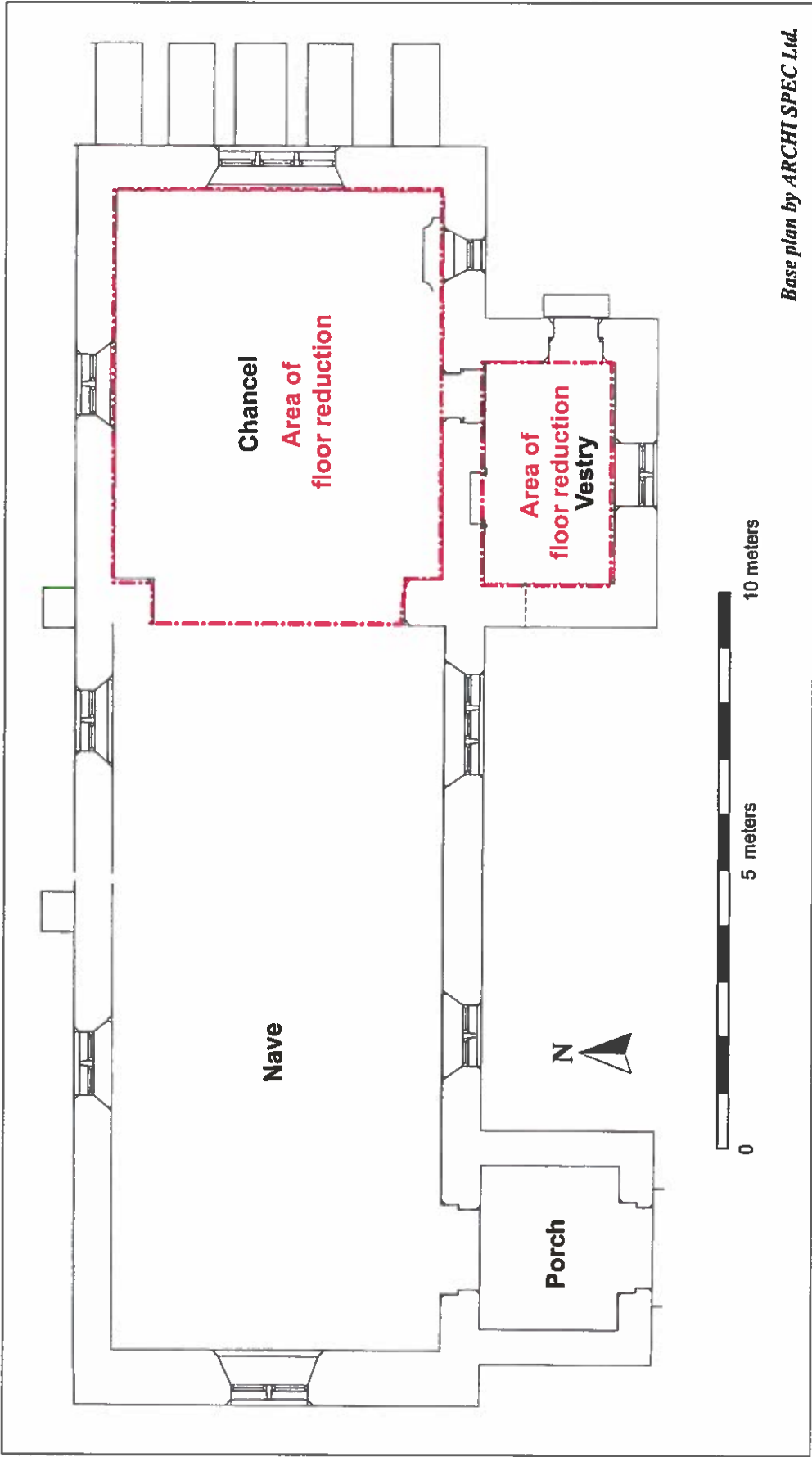
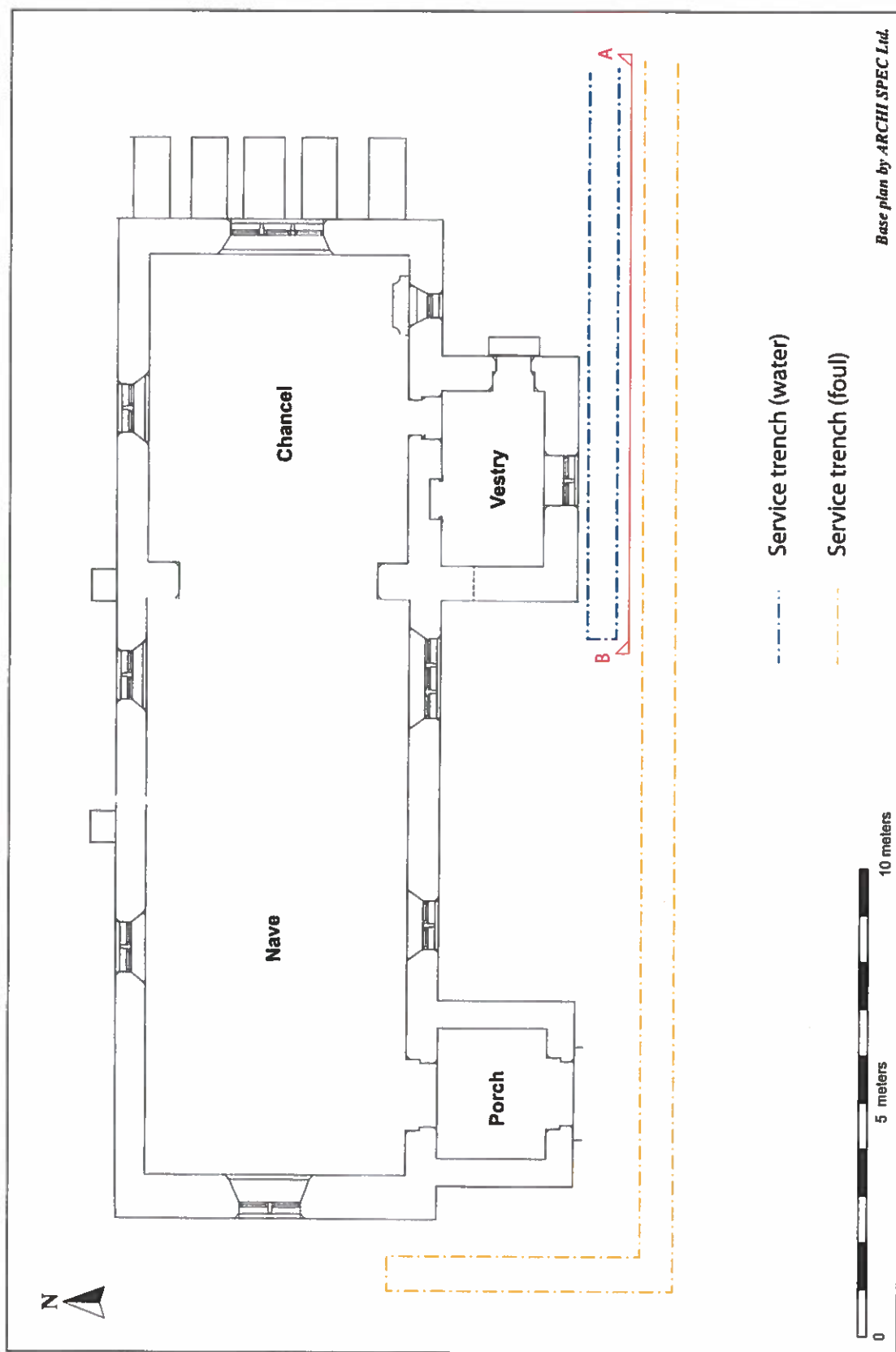


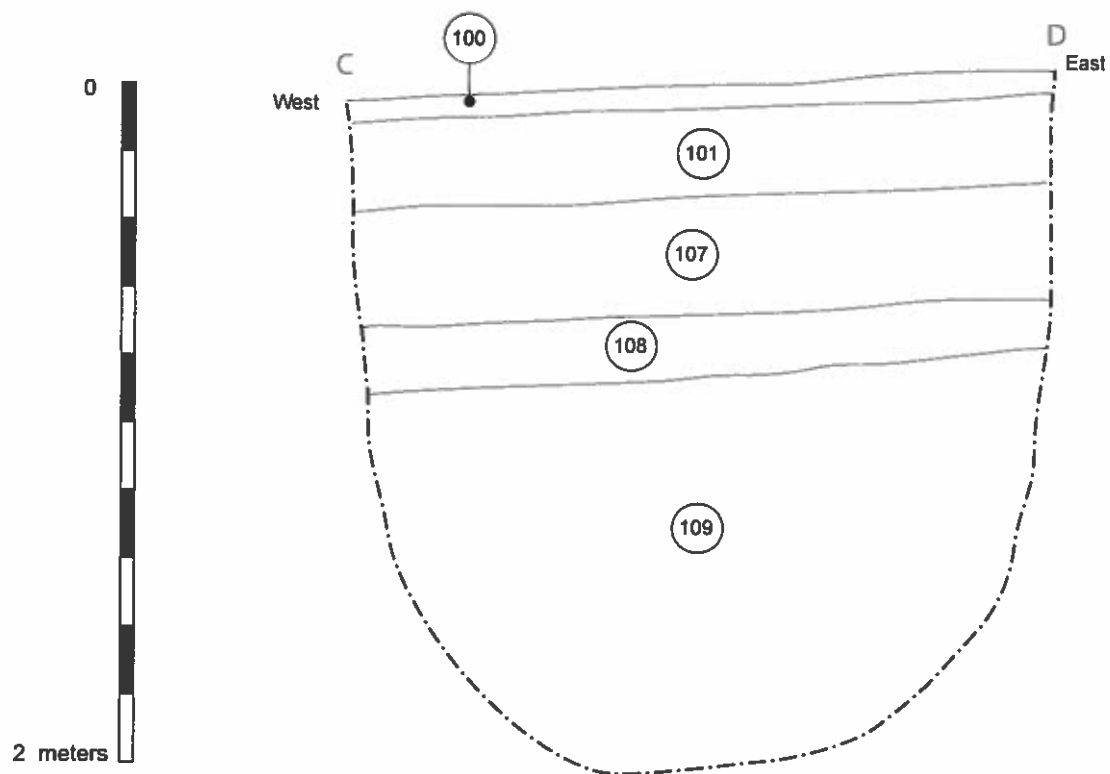
Figure 24. Architects ground plan of Nant Cwnlle Church prior to conversion.



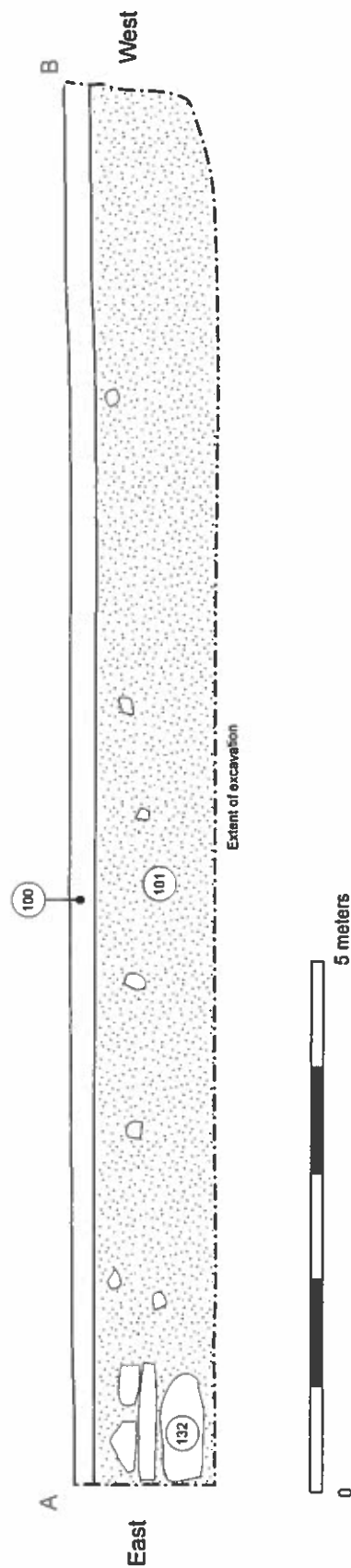
**Figure 25.** Ground plan showing position of service trenches in respect to church's south facing elevation, with position of section A-B.

**CONTEXTS**

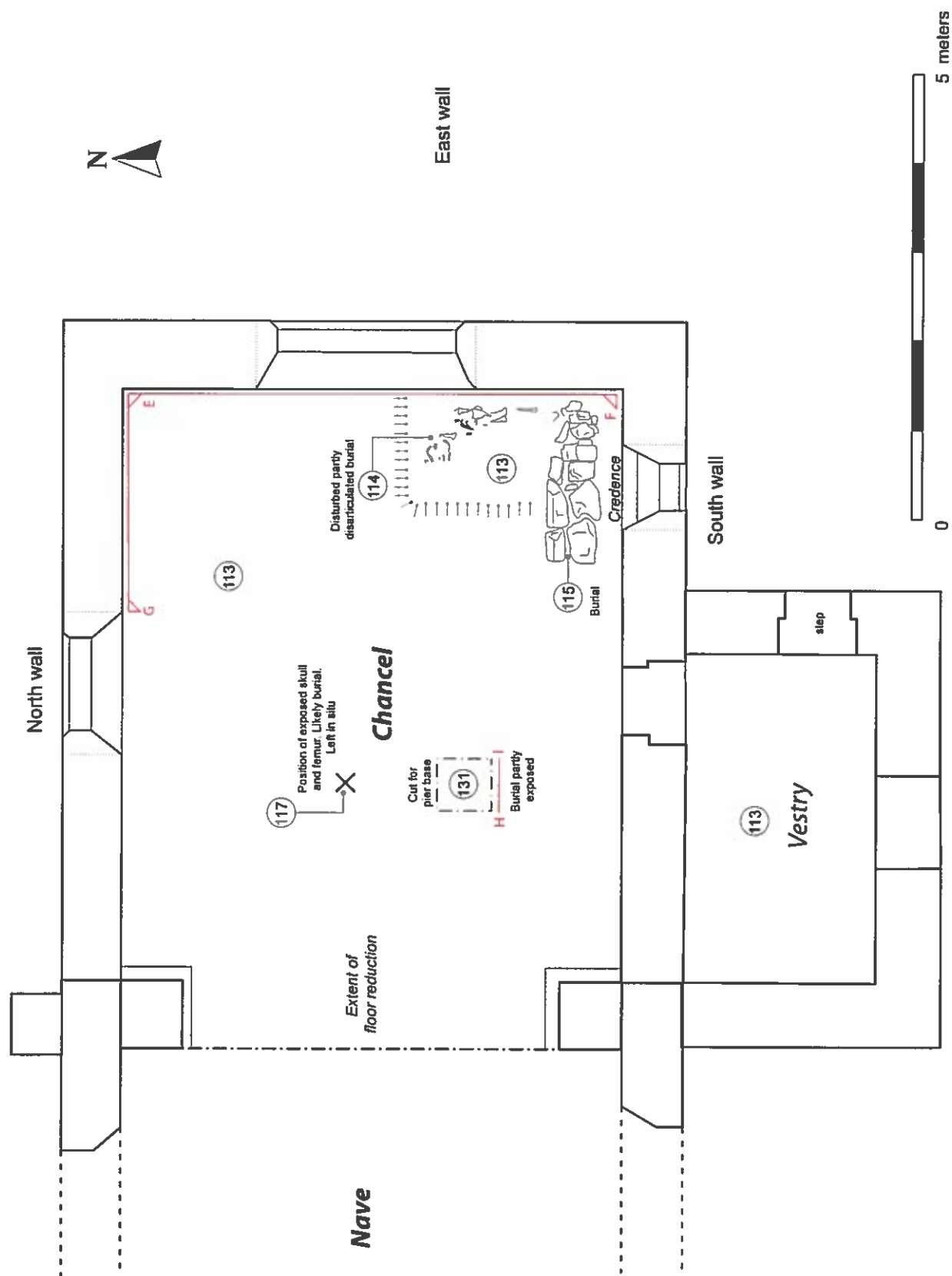
- 100 = top soil
- 101 = Sub soil (mid brown silty sandy clay)
- 107 = Dark grey clay (natural)
- 108 = Light grey clay (natural)
- 109 = Grey shale/slate (natural).



**Figure 26.** South facing section of trench for septic tank.

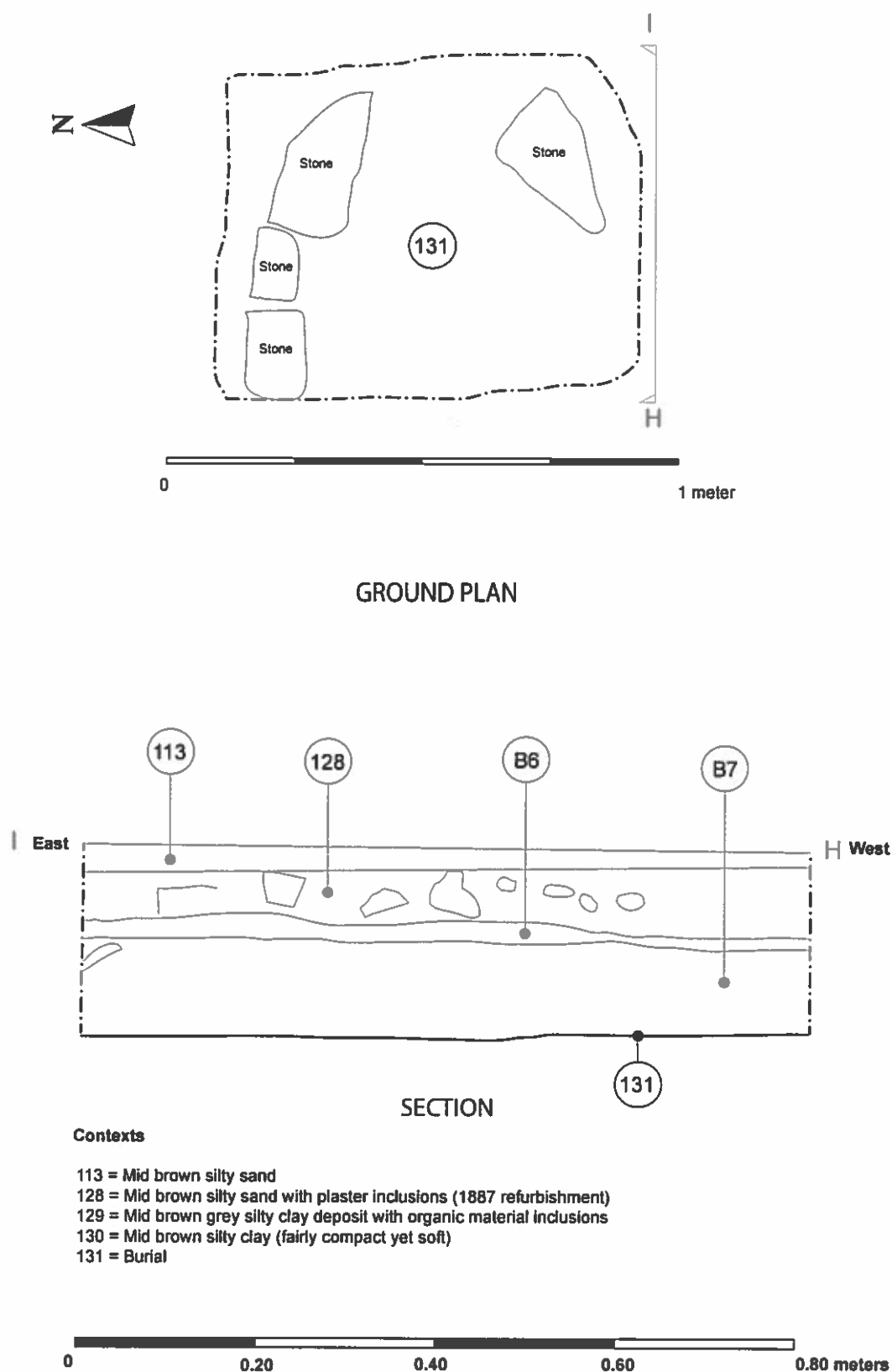


*Figure 27. North facing Section A-D, service trench (water)*

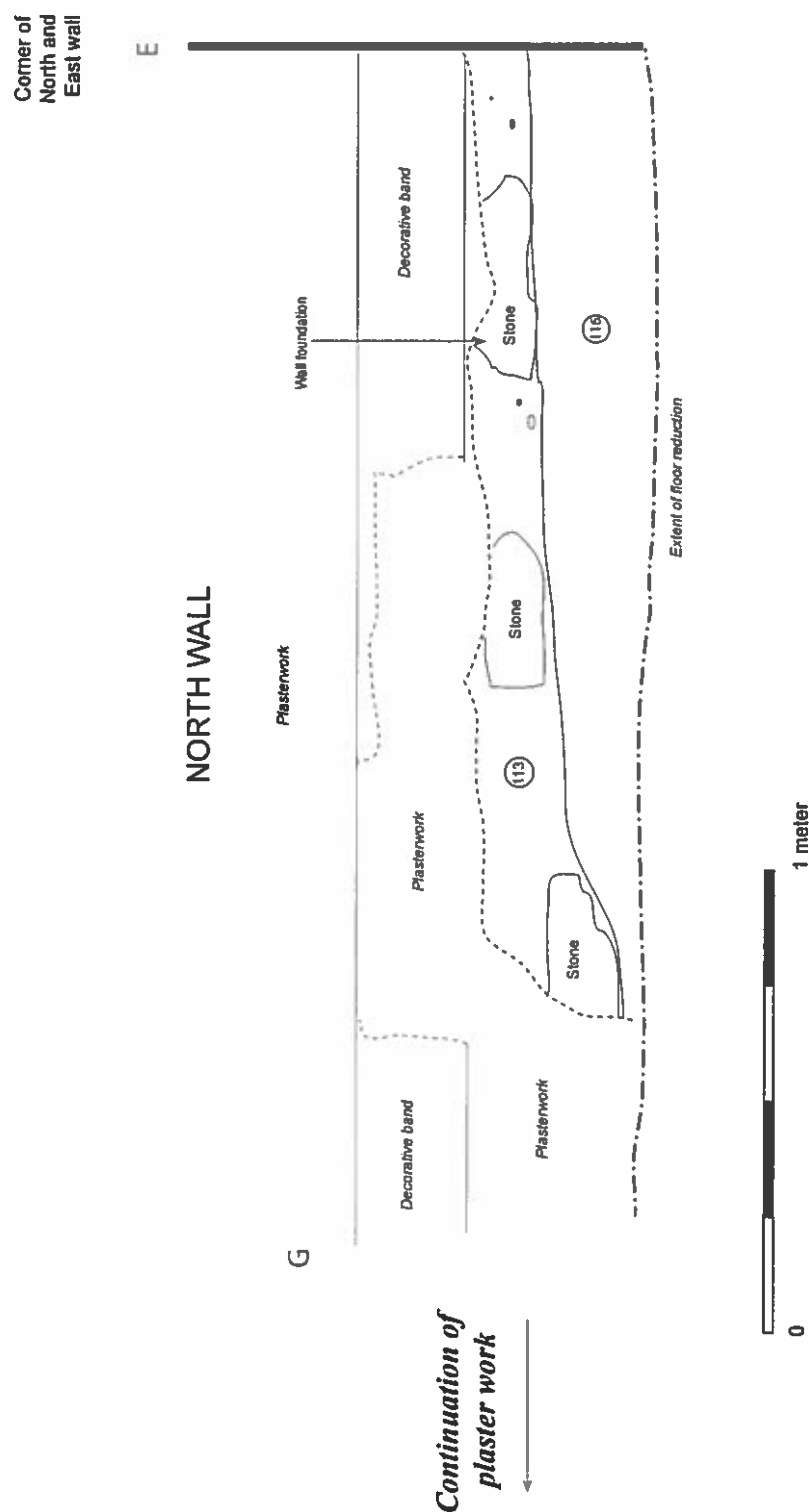


**Figure 28.** Ground plan of Nantcwnlle Church chancel area showing positions of exposed burials following floor reduction and index to section plans E-F, E-G and H-I.





**Figure 29.** Ground plan of exposed burial and north facing section H-I of pier base trench.



**Figure 30.** Exposed south facing section G-E at base of North wall, east end.

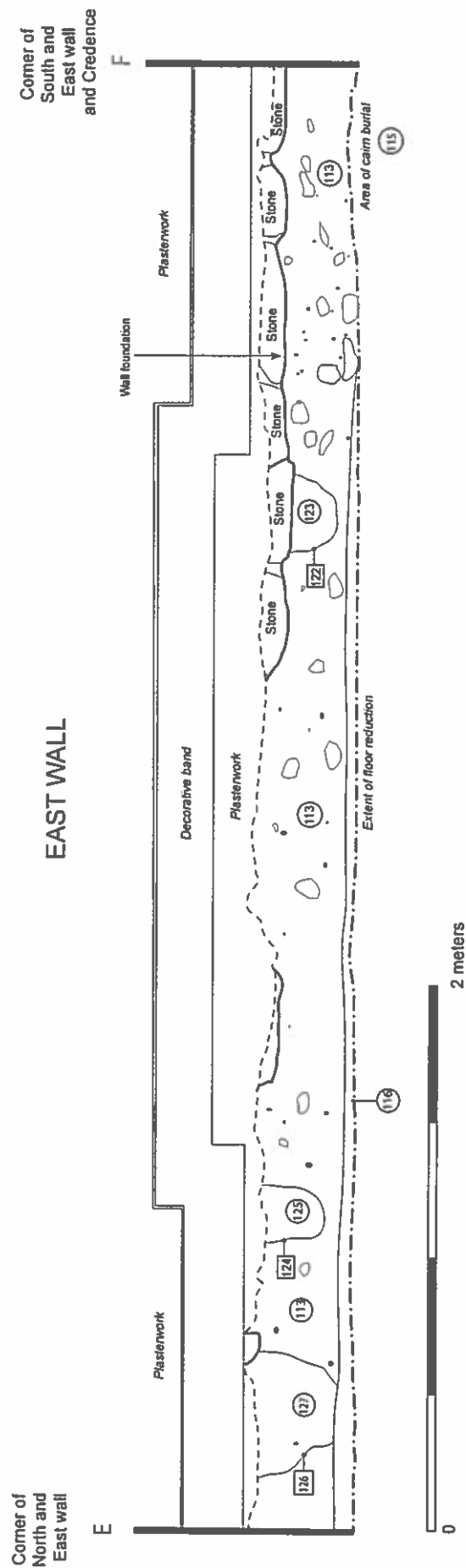


Figure 31. West facing section E-F at base of East wall of Chancel.

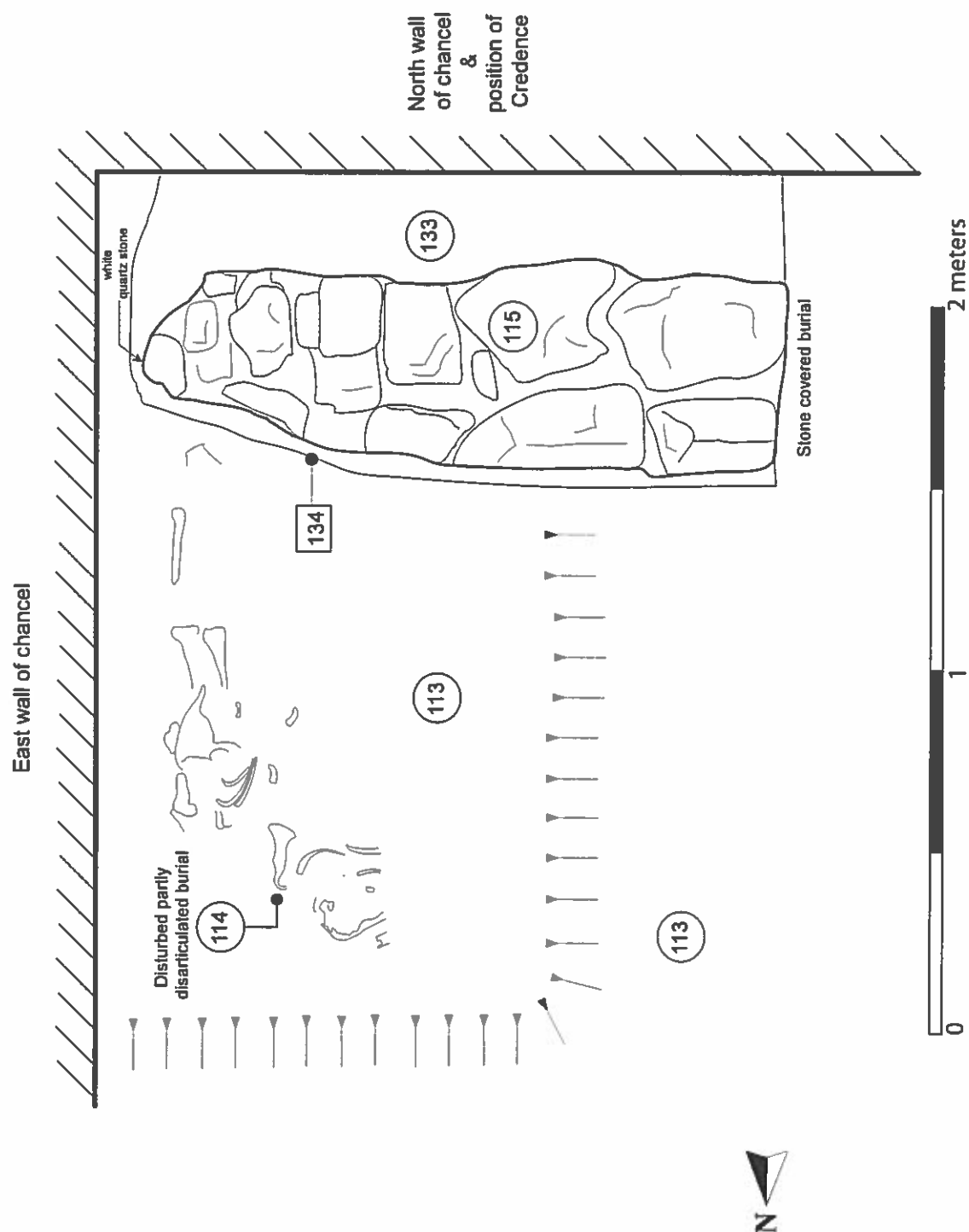


Figure 32. Burials exposed within chancel at south-east end following floor reduction.

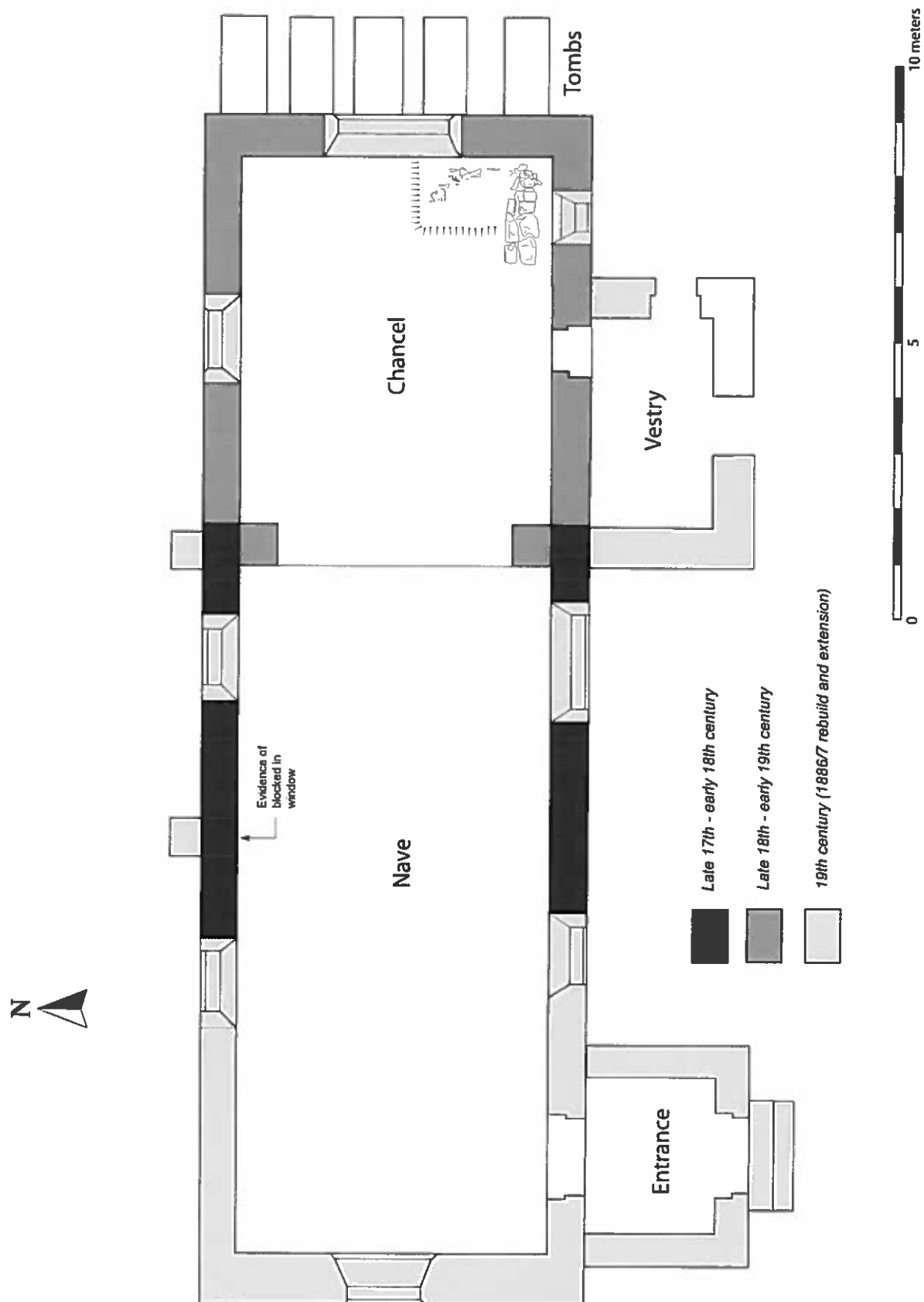
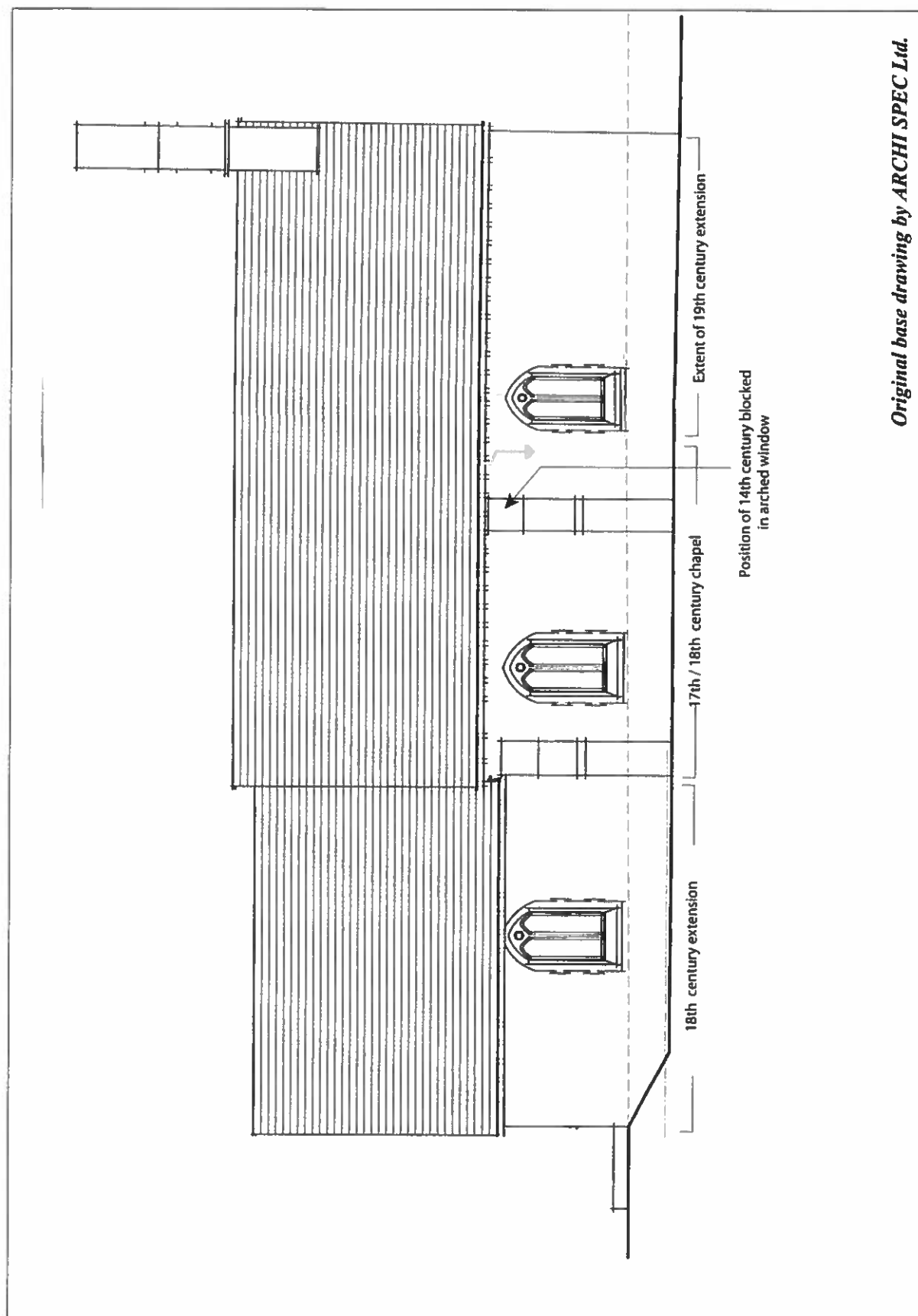


Figure 33. Ground plan of Nant-cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan.



**Figure 34.** North facing elevation showing development of Nant Cwnlle Church.



## **APPENDIX II:**

### **Photo plates**



*Plate 1.* Nantewnle Church and graveyard, Bwlchllan. Looking northeast.



*Plate 2.* Nantewnle Church and graveyard, Bwlchllan. Looking eastward.





*Plate 3.* Part of Nantcwnlle Church graveyard, Bwlchllan. Southern end looking west.



*Plate 4.* Nantcwnlle Church, Bwlchllan. East facing side, Looking west from main entrance to graveyard.



*Plate 3.* Part of Nantcwnlle Church graveyard, Bwlchllan. Southern end looking west.



*Plate 4.* Nantcwnlle Church, Bwlchllan. East facing side, Looking west from main entrance to graveyard.





**Plate 5.** Part of Nantewnle Church graveyard, Bwlchllan. Looking east toward old school house and spring from east side of church in area of proposed car parking area.



**Plate 6.** Area of natural spring in front of old school house alongside graveyard enclosure wall. Looking east.





*Plate 7.* Entrance gate from track leading into Nantcwnlle Church and graveyard. Looking west.



*Plate 8.* Entrance gate from graveyard toward trackway. Looking east.





*Plate 9.* Nant Cwnlle Church. North facing Chancel elevation. Looking south.



*Plate 10.* Oblique View of Nant Cwnlle Church north facing elevation showing buttress marking 1886/7 extension..





**Plate 11.** Nant Cwnlle Church. North facing elevation, west end showing area of 19th century extension. Note different mortar types. Looking south.



**Plate 12.** Oblique View of Nant Cwnlle Church south facing elevation between Vestry and Porch. Proposed area of Conservatory. Note 19th century gravestone in position of surveying pole. Looking northwest.





**Plate 13.** Nant Cwnlle Church. Grave stone of 'David Edwards', who died in 1916', located in area of proposed conservatory. Removed and now re-positioned in main graveyard area.



**Plate 14.** Working shot showing dismantling of entrance gate in order to allow access to church for proposed ground works. Looking west.





*Plate 15.* View of iron grating covering likely former well across threshold of Nant Cwnlle Church entrance to graveyard.



*Plate 16.* Working shot during top soil removal for area of proposed car parking Looking southwest.





*Plate 17.* Shot of exposed stone slab in area of entrance gate alongside former iron grating that covered likely former well.



*Plate 18.* Large stone slab exposed at edge of former of well located at threshold between graveyard and entrance gate. Looking east.





*Plate 19.* Exposed stone culvert running across church access track from natural spring by old school house. Looking west toward graveyard.



*Plate 20.* Exposed stone culvert running across church access track from natural spring by old school house. Looking northeast toward school house, source of spring.





*Plate 21.* Service trench alongside church vestry. Looking west.



*Plate 22.* Working shot during service trench work in area of car-park. Looking east toward entrance gate.



**Plate 23.** Interior of Nant Cwnlle Church prior to conversion. Looking west from area of Chancel.



**Plate 24.** Interior of Nant Cwnlle Church prior to conversion. Looking east toward Chancel.





*Plate 25.* Chancel area prior to ground works for floor reduction. Looking east.



*Plate 26.* Chancel area prior to ground works for floor reduction. Looking northeast.



**Plate 27.** Chancel area prior to groundworks for floor reduction. Looking southwest.



**Plate 28.** Chancel area prior to groundworks for floor reduction. Looking east.





**Plate 29.** Area of Chancel following initial removal of underlying deposit beneath concrete surface. Looking eastward from newly constructed balcony.



**Plate 30.** Partly dis-articulated remains of heavily disturbed burial at far end of Chancel. Looking eastward.



**Plate 31.** Partly dis-articulated remains of heavily disturbed burial at far end of Chancel. Looking northeast.



**Plate 32.** Partly dis-articulated remains of heavily disturbed burial at far end of Chancel. Looking south.





**Plate 33.** Area of Chancel following floor reduction to required level. Note exposed partly disarticulated remains and other burial aligned east-west marked by capping stones at far southeast corner of Chancel directly below prayer niche. Looking east.



**Plate 34.** Partly dis-articulated remains of heavily disturbed burial at far end of Chancel with further burial marked by capping stones at rear of shot.. Looking south.



**Plate 35.** Burials 114 and 115 at far east end of Chancel. Looking east.



**Plate 36.** Burial 115 at far south east corner of Chancel. Looking southeast.





**Plate 37.** View of exposed burial 115 following floor reduction at far southeastern corner of chancel. Looking east.



**Plate 38.** Burials 114 and 115 at far east end of Chancel. Looking east.



**Plate 39.** Area of burials following recording and removal of disarticulated remains and capping stones of burial 2. Looking south.





**Plate 40.** Exposed west facing section at base of wall foundation at far south-east end corner of Chancel.



**Plate 41.** Exposed west facing section at base of wall foundation at far northeast end corner of Chancel.



**Plate 42.** Excavated pier base for proposed stairwell support in Chancel area..



**Plate 43.** Stratigraphic north facing section in pier base trench in Chancel area. Looking south.





**Plate 44.** Base of support arch pillar between Chancel and Nave following floor reduction. Looking west.



**Plate 45.** Exposed threshold into Chancel from Vestry following floor reduction. Looking northeast.



**Plate 46.** Floor of vestry following floor reduction. Looking east.



**Plate 47.** View of Chancel floor following floor reduction and terram sheeting laid down with archaeological deposits preserved beneath in situ. Looking northeast.





**Plate 48.** Exposed spring of blocked in arched window in north wall of Nave behind plasterwork following removal of memorial plaque. Looking north.



**Plate 49.** Working shot during groundwork for excavation of septic tank in graveyard area. Looking south.





**Plate 50.** Trench for septic tank. Looking north.



**Plate 51.** Service trench for foul drain alongside water service trench. Looking west.



*Plate 52.* Trench for septic tank soakaway. Looking south.



## **APPENDIX III:** **Finds Summary**

## SMALL FINDS REGISTER

### Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion

#### Chancel Area.

##### Context 112

- Approximately 15kg of disarticulated human bones (wet with soil).
- 3 x iron (Fe) nails, two approximately 30mm in length and one approximately 10mm in length,
- 1 x iron (Fe) door bracket.
- one piece of grey slate worked into a heart shape., approximately 50mm in diameter and 5mm in thickness.

#### Vestry Area.

##### Context 134

- Approximately 20kg of disarticulated human bones (wet with soil).

#### Car Park area.

##### Context 101

- one small fragment of 18<sup>th</sup> century slipware
- a small fragment of coarse mottled green glaze, likely 17<sup>th</sup> century in date.



## **APPENDIX IV:** Context Register



## SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS

### Nant Cwnlle Church, Bwlchllan, Ceredigion

#### Graveyard Area/Car Park / Access track Area

- 100 = Top soil
- 101 = Sub soil (mid brown grey soil with shale stone inclusions 10%)
- 102 = Stone slab by well
- 103 = Tree bowl following removal of yew tree.
- 104 = Cut for drainage channel
- 105 = Cut for drainage channel
- 106 = Cut for drainage channel
- 110 = Stone culvert in track

#### Septic Tank

- 107 = Dark grey clay (natural)
- 108 = Light grey clay (natural)
- 109 = Grey shale/slate (natural).

#### Chancel Area

- 111 = Concrete floor
- 112 = Floor make up beneath concrete (various) - River gravel/stones/soil/disarticulated remains)
- 113 = Mid brown/orange silt/sand/clay mix with charcoal inclusions (1-2%)
- 114 = disturbed burial (part disarticulated)
- 115 = Burial (Cairn)
- 116 = Compact grey clay and shale (natural)
- 117 = Burial (skull and femur)
- 118 = Cut for pier base
- 119 = Potential burial
- 120 = Arch pillar (N end)
- 121 = Arch pillar (S end)
- 122 = Possible former cut for disturbed burial (114)
- 123 = Fill of 122
- 124 = Cut
- 125 = Fill of cut (124)
- 126 = Cut
- 127 = Fill of cut (126)
- 133 = Fill of burial (115)
- 134 = Cut for burial (115)

#### Pier Base

- 128 = Mid brown silty sand with plaster inclusions (1887 refurbishment)
- 129 = Mid brown grey silty clay deposit with organic material inclusions
- 130 = Mid brown silty clay (fairly compact yet soft)
- 131 = Burial

### **Service trenches**

132 = Large stones (possible burial or else remains of wall)

### **Vestry Area**

133 = Wooden block flooring

134 = Sub soil, mid brown soil with stone inclusions and mixed with disarticulated human bones.





## **APPENDIX V:** Archive Cover Sheet