

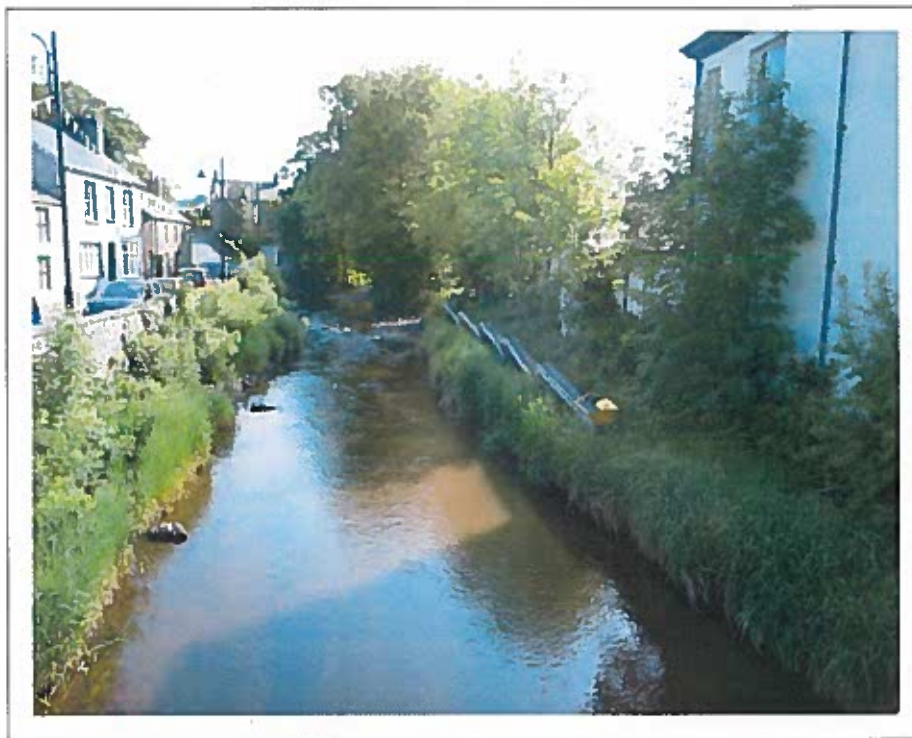


CAMBRIAN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECTS



Tregaron Flood Defence Scheme, Tregaron, Ceredigion.

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Report No. 579

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Archaeological Watching Brief

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Non Technical Summary

The following report is the result of archaeological work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd for ARUP, on behalf of the Environment Agency Wales. The report forms the last archaeological element in a phase of archaeological work undertaken as part of a Flood Alleviation Scheme on part of the Afon Brennig in Tregaron, Ceredigion. An earlier evaluation and watching brief report had already been undertaken. The work entailed the dredging of some 200 metres of the River Brennig in Tregaron Town to alleviate flooding and use of the resulting dredged materials used to create a flood defensive bank in an area of flood plain at the east end of the town.

This report is the result of a watching brief undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) during dredging work alongside Tregaron Bridge and a 50m stretch of river alongside Tregaron church enclosure.

The work alongside the bridge exposed no significant archaeological features or deposits. However, as was expected, the watching brief did manage to recover a fairly large sample of finds from the bed of the river, including a range of 18th –19th century ironwork, from mechanical components through to horse and cow shoes, several coins of George V period and, most significantly, two fragments of Romano-British pottery from the same large bowl.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following report is the result of archaeological work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects for ARUP, on behalf of the Environment Agency Wales. The report forms the last archaeological element in a phase of archaeological work undertaken as part of a Flood Alleviation Scheme on part of the Afon Brennig in Tregaron, Ceredigion. The work entailed the dredging of some 200 metres of the River Brennig in Tregaron Town to alleviate flooding and use of the resulting dredged material used to create a flood defence bund in an area of flood plain at the east end of the town. An earlier Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposals was undertaken in May 2007 (Jones 2007), which resulted in the undertaking of an archaeological evaluation and watching brief in the area of the flood plain (Owen 2008; Smith 2008).
- 1.2 This report is the result of a watching brief undertaken during dredging work for an approximate 100 metre stretch of part of the River Brennig alongside the Tregaron bridge and churchyard, Tregaron, Ceredigion.
- 1.3 Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd were contracted by ARUP to carry out the archaeological watching brief of the proposed scheme, which took place between the months of May and June 2009.

Background of proposals

- 1.4 Tregaron has a history of flooding with 104 residential and commercial properties at risk. The last significant flood events occurred in 1987 (when there was extensive flooding to shops and properties in the town) and in 1998.

Site Location and Description

- 1.3 The proposed dredging element of the Flood Alleviation Scheme is concentrated on a 200 metre length of the River Brennig in Tregaron Town (NGR: SN 6784 5957 - SN 6798 5972) starting from Tregaron bridge, alongside an existing garage on the southern bank of the river and then downstream to the southwest.

- 1.4 The town of Tregaron is located some 5 miles south from 'Maes Llyn, Cors Caron', otherwise known as Tregaron Bog, which is a National Nature Reserve and holds some of the country's most important habitats and groups of species. Historically, the town of Tregaron falls within the Ceredigion Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales (HLW No.4), prepared by Cadw, the Countryside Council for Wales and ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites).

Topography & Geology

- 1.6.1 The geology of the area is predominantly of the Silurian period and consists of an Undivided Llandovery series of Sedimentary rock, including Carboniferous limestone.
- 1.7 Tregaron town is at an Ordnance Survey datum height of 171m OD. The Afon Brennig is a tributary stream sourced from both the Afon Berwyn that runs west down slope from Llyn Berwyn, and the Afon Groes, which begins its journey from the north-east, emerging from 'Carn-Gron', the mountain that rises from within the moorland landscape known as Rhos Gelli-Gron, some 5-6 km from Tregaron. Further north by about 5-6 Km is Tregaron Bog or 'Cors Caron'. Once meeting, both these streams create the Brennig, which eventually joins up with the Afon Teifi at Glan Brennig.

Historical and Archaeological Background

- 1.8 The old market town of Tregaron finds itself within the parish of Caron, which covered, according to the tithe records of 1839/42, an area of 39,138 acres. Prior to 1730 Tregaron had its own borough with accompanying council. The town was supposedly named after a third century Welsh chief called Caron, who as legend has it, is buried somewhere in the Tregaron region, possibly even beneath the church of Caron itself in the town. The mountain landscape to the east of Tregaron is extensively covered in Bronze Age cairns of all forms.
- 1.9 Although the landscape surrounding the town of Tregaron is fairly well covered in Iron Age and even Roman sites, as is represented by Iron Age forts and Roman marching camps and roads, there are no known recorded sites, features or find-spots associated with the Roman period within the town itself.
- 1.10 Although the town of Tregaron had early medieval foundations, the only early medieval data records within the survey area are a series of inscribed stone fragments dating to around the sixth to the ninth centuries, once located within St. Caron church, now believed to be in Cardiff Museum. Also from this early medieval period is the foundation of the church and churchyard of St. Caron (PRN: 50161). The churchyard was later occupied by the medieval Tregaron parish church. The first church was listed as 'Carnoun' or 'Caraoun' in the Taxatio of 1291 and has a Welsh foundation.
- 1.11 The Church of St. Caron, towards the centre of the town by the main bridge, sits atop a mound similar to that of the church at Llandewi-Brefi, the village some 5 km to the south. Some believe that this mound is either the burial place of Caron or else the mound is an earlier Bronze Age burial mound. Both the churches at Llandewi-Brefi and that of St. Caron mark the Cistercian monks route toward Strata Florida Abbey, now in ruins just outside the village of Pontrhydfendigaid some 7 km to the north-east.
- 1.12 With regards the location of the proposed dredging work, the earlier environmental impact assessment identified from cartographic sources that the area alongside the bridge, which had formerly been constructed from stone, and occupied in 1840 on the southern side by a public house, which was later used as a garage service in the twentieth century. The tithe map of 1840 also identified that there had formerly been no buildings on the northern side of the banks, which today is occupied all along its length by residential dwellings and shops.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, the purpose of the watching brief was:
- 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 were not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard
- 2.3 The watching brief was not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it was intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.
- 2.4 The objective of the watching brief was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 To enable dredging work of the river to be undertaken unhindered, the river was dammed at the bridge/church end and the river diverted onto one side down a series of large plastic pipes. This enabled groundwork to be undertaken on the now clear side of the river-bed, whereupon the 'armour' of the river was temporarily removed thereby exposing the underlying silt, which was dredged and reduced to the required depth. In the same area of the temporary dam a new sluice was put in place constructed from large boulders. This was to stop future silting up of the river further downstream. Prior to dredging the exposed part of the river was walked over and samples of identifiable and significant finds retained.
- 3.2 The dredging of the river alongside Tregaron bridge was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a 1m wide grading bucket. Should any archaeological features or deposits become exposed during this work, limited excavation of the feature or deposit was to be undertaken to establish the date, depth, preservation, extent, function and relationship to other features.
- 3.3 Any recording work of newly exposed features and deposits during the watching brief was to be undertaken in three formats:
- i) *Photographic record* - Photographs were appropriated in digital TIFF format to a minimum 5 mega-pixel resolution.
 - ii) *Drawn record* - Site drawings, plans and sections, were produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film. Finished drawings were to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.
 - iii) *Written record* - Written records were produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts.
- 3.4 An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place in case the archaeological deposits warranted it. However, it was not felt that the deposits encountered required sampling.
- 3.5 All archaeological features identified were to be tied in locationally to the OS survey grid and fixed local topographic boundaries. However, in this instance no features or significant deposits

were identified.

- 3.6 The newly dredged material alongside the bridge and the church enclosure was initially taken to the site compound, where it was first scanned visually and then with a metal detector set to detect conductive metals only such as gold, silver and copper, as all of the upper levels of the dredged deposits, to approximately 0.30m in depth, were well laden with various iron objects, such as 19th and 20th century car parts, horse shoes, nails and remains of tools. Following visual examination of the dredged material, only a small number of iron objects were retained as samples, such as horse shoes and cow shoes, as these were seen as objects relevant to Tregaron town's drovers history. All other iron objects, once identified and deemed insignificant, were then discarded. All metal small finds other than iron, such as coins and belt buckles, were retained. All pottery fragments recovered from the dredged material were inspected and only those deemed of significance were retained.
- 3.6 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.

4 Results of Watching Brief (see figs 4-14)

- 4.1 No archaeological features or deposits were noted during the watching brief for the dredging of the river alongside the bridge and the existing garage. However a large number of iron objects were recovered as finds samples from both the river-bed surface and from the dredged material following metal detection. These finds were examined and identified and only the most significant finds and those relevant to Tregaron's drovers history were retained. This included:

Iron Objects

2 x large horse shoes (18th – 19th century)
5 x cow shoes (two of which were only approximately 5cm in width) (18th – 19th century)

Small finds

2 x brass belt buckles (18th – 20th century)
1 x rifle bullet cartridge casing (20th century)
4 x George V halfpenny coins (1917-1928)
2 x George VI penny coins (1939-1945)
1 x Elizabeth II halfpenny (1959)

Pottery

2 x small pottery fragments characteristic of Romano-British ware and likely from the same large bowl or pot. One of these fragments is identifiable as a pot rim. The pottery type is yet to be properly identified.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The watching brief during the dredging work of the River Brennig alongside Tregaron Bridge and the churchyard enclosure identified no archaeological features or deposits within the river bed. However, the watching brief did manage to recover a large sample of finds from both the river-bed and the dredged material. This included a large number of iron objects, mainly remains of 20th century car components and tools and several horse and cow shoes. Only a small number of these iron objects were considered significant and were retained. Other finds included two belt buckles, several George V and George VI penny and halfpenny coins and two small fragments of Roman-British pottery, whose type is yet to be fully identified.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to: All those involved on the dredging work of the River Brenig for being patient and understanding during the watching brief work.

7 Bibliography

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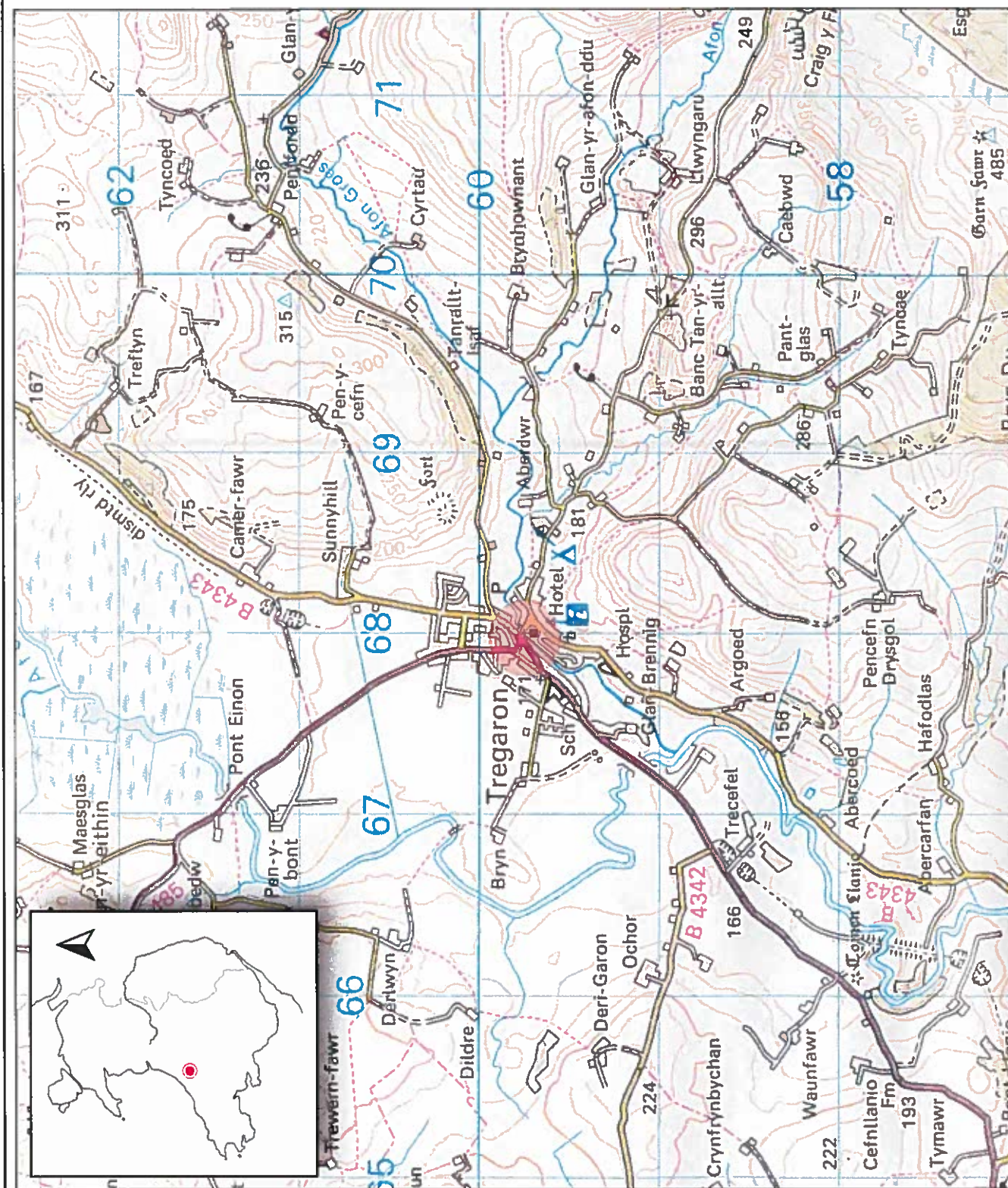
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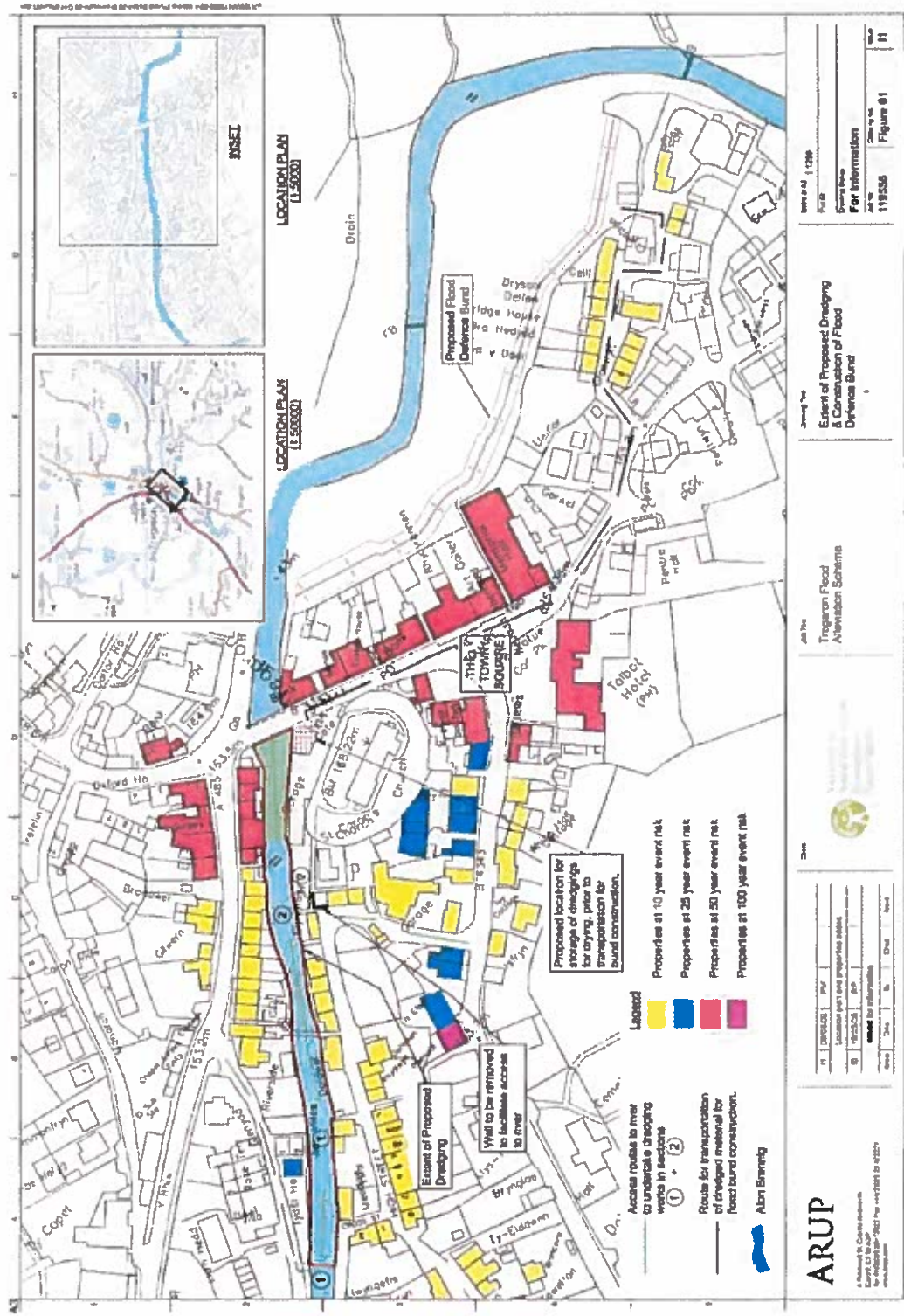
*Pathway
to the past*



APPENDIX I: **Figs & Illustrations**



Job Title:	Tregaron Flood Alleviation Scheme Archaeological Watching Brief
Drawing Title:	
Date:	August 2009
Drawn By:	
Scale:	
Figure 01: Location map (1:50,000)	



Job Title:
Tregaron Flood Alleviation Scheme
Archaeological Watching Brief

Drawing Title:

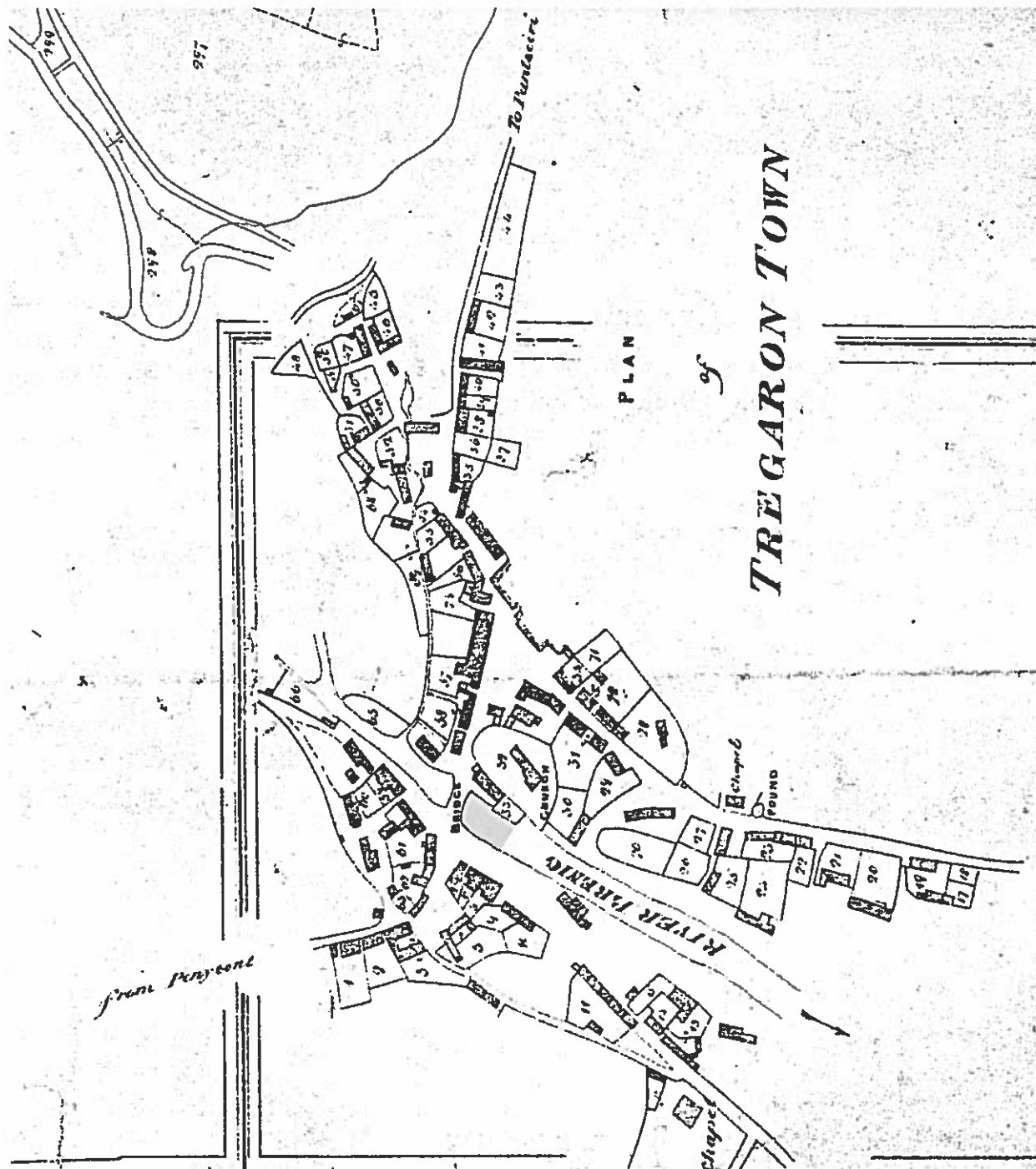
Date: August 2009

Drawn By:

Scale:

Figure 02: Extent of Works





Job Title:
Tregaron Flood Alleviation Scheme
Archaeological Watching Brief

Drawing Title:

Date: August 2009

Drawn By:

Scale:

Figure 03: Tithe map of 1839.

Watching brief area highlighted in green

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to the past*



APPENDIX II: **Photo plates**

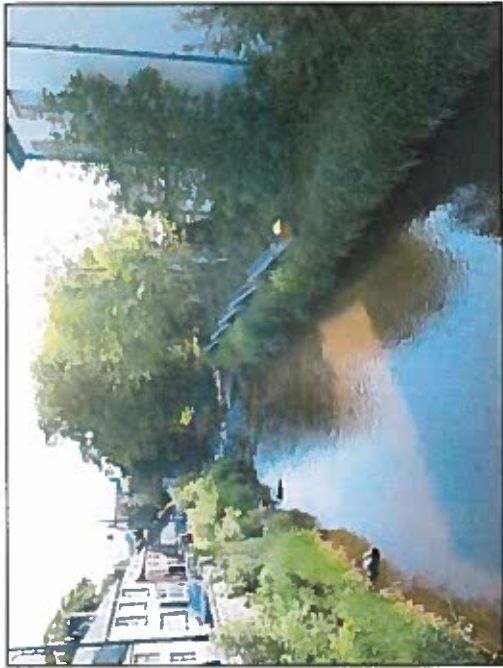


Plate 1 View of Afon Brenning from Tregaron Bridge prior to dredging. Looking south.



Plate 2 Damming and diverting of river by bridge in preparation for dredging. Looking south from bridge.



Plate 3 Dredging of river in area of Tregaron bridge. Looking east from bridge.



Plate 4 Damming and diverting of river by bridge in preparation for dredging. Looking south from bridge.

Job Title:
Tregaron Flood Alleviation Scheme
Archaeological Watching Brief

Drawing Title:

Date: August 2009

Drawn By:

Scale:

Photo plates: 1-4



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to the past*



APPENDIX III: **Finds Register**

Finds Register

Watching Brief during dredging work alongside bridge and churchyard enclosure

Iron Objects

- 2 x horse shoes (18th/19th century) (Fe).
- 5 x cow shoes (19th century) (Fe)

Small finds

- 2 x brass belt buckles (19th century)
- 1 x rifle bullet shell casing (20th century)
- 4 x George V half-pennies (1917-1928) (Cu alloy)
- 2 x George VI pennies (1939-1945) (Cu alloy)
- 1 x Elizabeth II half-penny (1959) (Cu alloy)

Pottery

- 2 x pottery fragments (Romano-British ware)

*Pathway
to the past*



APPENDIX IV: **Archive Cover Sheet**

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Tregaron Flood Alleviation Scheme, Tregaron, Ceredigion

ARCHIVE DESTINATION – RCAHMW Archives.

Site Name:	Tregaron Flood Alleviation Scheme.
Site Code:	TREG/08/WB
PRN:	
NPRN :	N/A
SAM:	N/A
Other Ref No:	CAP Report No. 477 / 524 / 526
NGR:	SN 6784 5957
Site Type:	Various
Project Type:	Watching Brief
Project Officer:	Richard Scott Jones
Project Dates:	May-June 2009
Categories Present:	N/A
Location of Original Archive:	Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd.
Location of duplicate Archives:	RCAHMW
Number of Finds Boxes:	
Location of Finds:	N/A
Museum Reference:	Not assigned
Copyright:	CAP Ltd
Restrictions to access:	None

