

LLYS AND MAERDREF

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE LOCATION OF THE ROYAL COURTS OF THE PRINCES OF GWYNEDD

REPORT NO. 167

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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OF THE ROYAL COURTS OF
THE PRINCES OF GWYNEDD (GAT30)

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INTRODUCTION

By the twelfth-thirteenth centuries the administration of the kingdom of Gwynedd was based on a network of local foci serving an itinerant royal court. These courts or *llysoedd* were based on the local administrative unit known as the commote. In theory the King held two townships in each commote for his own use. One of these was the king's summer (often upland) pasture, the other his demesne land. This was usually referred to as the *maerdref*=mayor's township, in which would be located the *llys* or royal court.

The component parts of a *llys/maerdref* complex include the *llys* itself, with its royal hall and other buildings, the royal demesne (*tir bwrdd*) worked by bond tenants holding their land in *tir cyfrif* tenure, and the settlement of the tenants which might be close to the *llys* and generally assumed to be nucleated. "The important part to remember about...bond townships is that they were generally nucleated communities" (Carr 1982, 31).

While the names of most of the *llysoedd* are known, their precise location has yet to be securely identified within the modern county of Gwynedd (with perhaps the sole exception of Degannwy castle). This very ignorance of their location renders these sites vulnerable to a range of inadvertent threats including agricultural commercial and residential developments.

The threats can be amply demonstrated. At Aberffraw a new housing estate (built in the 1960s) now sprawls over the probable location of the court complex. At Llanfaes the shell oil pipeline (1980s) cuts a 30m swathe through the recently identified evidence for the pre-conquest town.

The *llys* and *maerdref* project originated out of a Cadw funded rapid urban survey of historic towns in Gwynedd. In the first full season devoted to the Welsh administrative centres alone, the six Anglesey sites were investigated in detail. That season's work showed the enormous potential of documentary evidence in tracing landholdings, land transfers and property boundaries associated with the royal past. In the following year the study was extended to Caernarvonshire and Meirionethshire. The documentary study was followed up by fieldwork, including fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial excavation.

Composition of the report

The first section of the report deals with the methodology employed in the study. Starting with the general locational search to identify target areas it then considers the more in-depth documentary analysis. This section also examines the post-conquest history of the commotal centres. The following section looks at the principles employed in the topographical reconstructions of the townships that are shown in the maps accompanying the gazetteer. There is a short section on the field work element of the project. Topographical and archaeological features that may be indicative of *llys* locations are discussed. This section involves a consideration of the relationship between motte and bailey castles, churches and modern day villages with *llys* complexes.

Evidence of the nature of *llysoedd* and *maerdrefi* in the thirteenth century is reviewed as well as the impact of the Edwardian conquest on the administrative centres.

The largest section of the report is the gazetteer. This contains the results of the documentary studies, including a list of antiquarian references, an interpretation of the data collected together with recommendations for further work. An accompanying map plots the relevant sites and topographical reconstructions.

Acknowledgement

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METHODOLOGY

While the names of most of the commotal centres are known, their exact location has been lost. "No unfortified *llys* that retains both its name and structure has been securely identified in Caernarvonshire" (RCAHM cxliii) the same is true of both Anglesey and Meirionethshire.

Evidence for the general locations of the commotal centres/*llysoedd* are to be sought in a number of sources; these are:

Letters or Charters of the Princes
Post Conquest Itineraries of Edward I
Post Conquest Edwardian Extents
Place Name Evidence
Antiquarian Evidence
Topographical Evidence :
Physical relationships between motte and baileys, churches and *llysoedd*, etc

General locational search

In the first year of the project a survey of the more accessible published material was undertaken in order to assemble a list of probable *llys* locations. This included a number of the most recent publications on medieval Wales and Gwynedd. All the main archaeological journals were also consulted (*T.C.H.S.*, *T.A.A.S.*, *J.M.H.S.*, *Arch Camb*, *B.B.C.S.*).

Primary sources

There are relatively few occasions when the progress of the court can be followed with any certainty, owing to the paucity of source material; however Stephenson has plotted the movements of the court between July of 1273 and January of 1277 (D Stephenson 1984, 233). The court was also resident at the stone castles and Cistercian granges associated with the dynasty.

Letters written by Llewelyn ap Iorwerth and Llewelyn ap Gruffydd from a number of these sites are to be found in both *Littere Wallie* and *A Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales* (Edwards 1940).

Itinerary of Edward I

Following the defeat of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1282 Edward I undertook a tour of his newly conquered territories. His itinerary included the majority of the commotal centres. A number of sites known on other grounds to have been pre-conquest royal sites are mentioned for the first time in Edward's itinerary (for example Castell Prysor 1 July 1284 and Dolbenmaen 13 August 1284). When considered as a whole the Edwardian itinerary is more complete than any surviving itinerary of either of the two Llywelyns and forms a valuable source with which to compare other available evidence.

Edwardian Extents

Post-conquest Edwardian Extents of the late thirteenth and mid fourteenth century are a primary source for details of the Welsh administrative system. References to the court buildings and to occasional repairs to those buildings are contained in the post-conquest extents as well as in other crown administrative records (see for example Jones Pierce 1931, 142-55). Often the terminology employed by the surveyors is of Welsh origin. However on occasion the Welsh castles and commotal centres are referred to as "manors" by the crown surveyors. The Extents also provide information on the tenure by which the townships were held. Information contained in the Edwardian surveys is also crucial in attempting any topographical reconstructions of the townships.

For Caernarvonshire an excellent discussion of the available evidence is given in tabular form in Vol III RCAHMW cxlvi.

The evidence for Meirioneth is not as detailed as that available for Anglesey and Caernarfon although there are two extents, one Edwardian extent of the late thirteenth century (M C J 1867) and a later extent of 1420 contained in the *Record of Caernarfon* (Ellis 1838).

Place name evidence

There are a number of place names in Gwynedd that might refer to the location of former high-status sites. Among the most useful are the appearance of the word *maerdref* in various forms attached to some of the commotal centres. *Maerdref* is used in the Edwardian extents for a small number of the sites and in at least five instances the name has survived in to the modern period. While it has previously been usual to describe the attribution of the name '*maerdref*' to the demesne township (some of the townships were co-terminous with some of the larger parishes in Gwynedd), the work undertaken by the Trust on the documentary records suggests that the application of '*maerdref*' may be more specific and that it relates to smaller units equivalent to hamlets within the township. These place names may have far greater potential in identifying both the royal courts and bond villages than has previously been thought.

Other place name indicators such as Henllys (old court) or Gadlys have also been considered (Lewis Morris translates gadlys as a King's temporary camp or palace; modern Welsh dictionaries sometimes have cadlys-camp or headquarters). Of these Gadlys often appears in association with supposed *llys* locations (for example at Penrhoslligwy, Nefyn, Pwllheli and is also evidenced adjacent to the Bishop of Bangor's *maerdref* township at Treffos on Anglesey).

Evidence from Antiquarian writings

A fairly extensive search was made of all available Antiquarian references. In many instances they comprise the only known detailed reference to the possible location of some of the *llys* sites. Some of the locations on the more popular antiquarian itineraries have received a large amount of antiquarian comment (Aberffraw and Aber for example), while some of the less well known sites such as Penrhoslligwy may only have a single entry among the antiquarian literature. While any such references need to be treated with caution, in a number of instances it is clear that some of the recorded observations derive from local traditions about the supposed site of the *Llys*. It would be foolish to ignore these accounts entirely. It is obvious that in a number of locations in Gwynedd some memory of the former sites of the courts persisted and were occasionally recorded by both local and visiting Antiquarians. The evidence for each site is discussed in the gazetteer section.

Later Post-conquest Sources for the Commotal Centres

The following summary is intended as an introduction to the different source materials consulted during the compilation of the *Llys* and *Maerdref* report. This section owes much to the work of such authors as T J Pierce, Glanville Jones, AD Carr, D Stephenson, W Ogwen Williams and CA Gresham.

Following the defeat of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd by Edward I in 1282, the English Crown acquired all the bond townships which had previously been the exclusive property of Llywelyn and his predecessors, "When Edward I annexed the principality, Prince Llywelyn's bond lands and bondmen became his." (W O Williams 1958, 38). Jones Pierce has calculated that on Anglesey alone this must have been as many as forty townships (Jones Pierce 1972, 274). Among the properties now administered by the English Crown were the old commotal centres which had formed the basis of the pre-Edwardian administration. It is unclear what role these administrative centres continued to perform at commotal level, if any, after 1282 (the occasional reference in the post-conquest accounts to the Rhaglaw's chamber might suggest some continued administrative function, although these halls would not have acted as

residences).

The rents for the bond villis including the commotal centres were now paid to the Caernarfon Exchequer, however the commotal centres were often farmed out to Royal favourites and local uchelwyr (Carr 1982, 85 Rees 1975). Relevant examples are given in the gazetteer section of the report.

Despite a decline in the number of bond tenants following the effects of the plague in the mid-fourteenth century and a resultant loss of revenue "a general improvement in the accounts shows that villeinage was still an active force in the social organisation of the shires of North Wales at the end of the fourteenth century" (Jones Pierce 1972 44). However the unsettled conditions of the fifteenth century, commencing as it did with Glyndwr's rebellion, precipitated the demise of the bond villis; "by the end of the fifteenth century bond land in many parts of the county lay untenanted and desolate" (Ogwen Williams 1958, 32 41; Jones Pierce 1972, 39).

Even in the late fifteenth century, and despite the decline in the bond population, the bond townships were still in theory *tir caeth* (bond land), and Jones Pierce suggests for that reason it possessed "little attraction for the landed gentry". It is also possible that "the outskirts of many of the bond villis had been absorbed into a neighbouring freehold" by this period (Jones Pierce 1972 47). Possibly in order to facilitate the exploitation of bond land, in 1507 the bondmen of the principality of North Wales were granted a charter of emancipation. Following the charter, leases of the bond townships by the crown were granted "far more frequently" than had previously been the case. This resulted in a series of disputes between the new lessees, and the tenants of the bond villis. These disputes can be followed in Records of the Court of Augmentation (Lewis, Conway Davies 1954) and subsequently in Exchequer Proceedings Concerning Wales (Jones E G 1939). Both sources often provide valuable information on the identity of the crown lessee, and often contain useful information about internal arrangements within the townships.

Sale of Crown Land

From the reign of Henry VII onwards the Crown appointed Special Surveyors to supervise the granting of leases of Crown land; Thomas Cromwell extended the use of auditors and surveyors. "Before long the auditors and surveyors had taken complete charge of the work of collecting the Crown revenues in the principality, and they were busy and important officials in North Wales until extensive sales of Crown lands, chiefly in the time of Charles I and the Commonwealth greatly reduced their work" (Ogwen Williams 1958, 34). Records relating to this period of the administration of Crown lands are to be found in the PRO in the Land Revenue Collection, among these one particular survey stands out for the wealth of information contained on Crown lands in Anglesey: LR 205, a survey of 1608.

In 1628 a large amount of Crown lands in both Anglesey and Caernarvonshire were sold to the Corporation of London. The Record Office of the Corporation of London contains records pertaining to the sale of those properties in the seventeenth century. The list contains a valuable account of the sale of several hamlets within townships containing two of the Anglesey Commotal Centres.

Estate Records

With the sale of Crown lands to private estates, the documentary evidence concerning what were previously bond townships is from here on contained in the collections of estate records housed in local archives eg UCNW Archive and at the Gwynedd Archive Service.

References to or documents of the original purchase of Crown lands are occasionally to be found amidst the estate records. Many of the new proprietors continued to refer to their new acquisitions as "Manors" in their estate rentals; indeed three of the Anglesey sites held manorial courts in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, although this does not imply any

continuity of such practice. (for a discussion on the manorial courts prior to the Act of Union, see Ogwen Williams 1958, 29). The estate records also include documentation such as inquisitions into Manor boundaries. Estate papers also often contain estate maps (for Gwynedd these are usually no earlier than the late eighteenth century) and provide the earliest cartographic source for the study areas. A full list of field names also occur for the first time in this source. These have been considered, as have those that occur on the Tithe maps. While time prevented a comprehensive scan of these field names, the majority will have been consulted. Where estate maps are unavailable the tithe map also provides the means to plot the extent of a particular estate's property within a parish.

Townships and Parishes

In a number of instances where there is sufficient documentation an attempt has been made to reconstruct the medieval township boundaries. The success of such an approach does in many instances depend on the amount of information contained in the original medieval extents. It is necessary therefore to consider the relationship between township boundaries and modern parish boundaries as this is crucial in dealing with the evidence. It is generally agreed that ecclesiastical parish boundaries in Gwynedd, which were accurately mapped for the first time in the tithe maps of the nineteenth century, have undergone numerous alterations since the twelfth and thirteenth century (Gresham 1987, 137 and Richards 1969). The Ecclesiastical Parish did not become the basic unit of administration until the Tudor Period, when the parish became increasingly important for the relief and maintenance of the poor.

However the townships continued to be used for such purposes as Quarter Sessions records until James I's reign.

"Medieval townships were referred to in the records of the Crown auditors and other records relating to Crown revenues until much later, since crown rents and dues continued to be based upon the economic system of the medieval principality" (Ogwen Williams 1958, 43). It is for this reason perhaps that references to townships are often found in eighteenth century land tax records, in particular for Anglesey (this continual use of the township as a meaningful unit is also apparent in many estate records, in rentals and land transactions well into the nineteenth century).

There are a number of simple rules in the original relationship between parish and township boundaries. Parishes could be coterminous with townships or larger parishes might contain "a number of smaller townships exactly within their boundaries" (Gresham 1987, 141). A township could not extend into more than one parish. Exceptions to these simple rules are likely to be as a result of later reorganisations. Aberffraw is a rare exception to the normal rule as the township extends beyond the parish boundary. A number of the *Maerdrefi* townships were among the bond townships that were coterminous with single parishes such as Penrhoslligwy and Dolbenmaen.

While it is impossible to be absolutely certain on this point it does appear as though, in the case of many of the commotal centres, there has been little adjustment in the parish/township boundaries. In many instances the original medieval layout of these units has been fossilised into the modern period. For example at Rhosyr, Cemaes and Aberffraw it appears possible to reconstruct the extent of the medieval townships. This may in part be due to the continuous administration of these units by crown officials and to continuity in ownership. Jones Pierce goes so far as to say that "the outer limits of many Caernarvonshire hamlets in late medieval times have been found to coincide roughly with the present boundaries of farm holdings, still bearing the names of the original hamlets" (Jones Pierce 1972, 49).

Surface fieldwork

Field work, at different levels of intensity, varying from a site visit to the motte at Tal y Bont in Meirioneth, for instance, to field-walking several hundred acres at Cemaes Anglesey was undertaken at all the probable *llys* locations. Particular attention was given to any possible

threats such as agricultural improvement, village expansion and so on. Relevant observations are recorded in the gazetteer entries and field notes deposited in the project archive at GAT. A number of new sites and archaeological and topographical features were located, varying from lime kilns, hut circles and crop marks, not all directly related to the current research. These will be entered on the Trust's Sites and Monuments Record.

A number of sites were selected for further work, including geophysical survey and limited excavation. Geophysical survey was undertaken at Aber, Rhosyr and Llanfaes, and any previous geophysical survey pertinent to the project has been included in the report. Excavations have been undertaken at Rhosyr, Aber and on a more limited scale at Llanfaes. A summary of the results is included in the text. Earlier excavations such as those at Degannwy and Aberffraw are referred to in the gazetteer.

Aerial Photographs

One resource which was identified which has yet to be consulted was the vintage R.A.F. coverage of the 1940s and 50s. It is possible that a number of target areas which have subsequently been built over such as the possible *llys* location at Aberffraw may benefit from this line of enquiry.

LLYS, COURT AND CASTLE

The RCAHMS Caernarvonshire Inventory refers to fortified *llysoedd*, (RCAHMS 1964 cxliii). Stephenson also refers to fortified demesne centres at Aber, Caernarfon and Nefyn (Stephenson 1984, 4) as do others (Beverley Smith 1975, 34). The notion that a *llys* might be, in some instances, based at a castle is often unpopular among archaeologists who tend to see the *llys* as "lightly protected within an enclosure, perhaps surrounded by a palisade or stone wall" (Avent 1983, 9). The problem may be one of terminology; in simple terms a castle is no more than a strongly defended residence with administrative functions. A *llys* could be a defended or non defended residence with administrative functions. At Degannwy for example it would be perverse to argue that the *llys* in the thirteenth century was anything other than the castle located on the two hillocks on the east bank of the Conway estuary. Criccieth castle may also have taken over the administrative functions of the motte at Dolbenmaen. However on the whole the thirteenth century stone castles were sited away from the commotal centres (Jones 1969). The motte and bailey complex at Marford described by Pratt under the heading Castle, Court and *Llys* is a tacit recognition of the problem of terminology. Here the "eleventh century" motte, possibly the site of the court of Osbern Fitztesso, was "rebuilt to become the new *llys* of Madog ap Maredudd (d1160). The castle was still of significant military importance in the late thirteenth century. By 1315 the timber keep on the motte had been replaced by a hall in the bailey which was maintained by the bondmen of adjacent townships. The hall was probably succeeded by Rofft hall built in 1575". (D Pratt 1992 35).

Speculation on the relationship between *Llys* and Castle is by no means new. In 1921 the RCAHMS inventory for Meirionnydd contained the following statement;

"It would appear that the Welsh chieftains of Edeirnion and Ardudwy, not content with copying the external marks of power of the English barons and their knightly followers by the adoption of the motte form of *llys* and castell, advanced claims to the possession of the dignity and privileges of great English manorial lords, and doubtless pointed with firm conviction to their mound castles as evidence of their status" (RCAHMS Merioneth Inventory 1921 xix).

Earthwork Castles

The initial scoping report for the *Llys* and *Maerdref* project drew attention to the correlation between the siting of "Norman earthwork castles" and the location of Welsh *Maerdrefi* in Gwynedd. The RCAHM had already noted that "there was a basic pattern of one castle (motte) to each commote in Caernarvonshire" (RCAHMS p.cxli) a pattern already noted in

Ceredigion by JG Edwards (Edwards 1956 164).

While Anglesey forms an exception to this rule it was noted that "there are only five *Maerdrefi* on Mainland Gwynedd without Mottes". (*LLys & Maerdref*, GAT report, 1991)

Anglesey	Motte	Possible Motte
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Aberffraw
Llanllibio
Cemaes
Penrhoslligwy
Llanfaes
Rhosyr

Caernarvonshire

Degannwy	X	
Aber	X	
Caernarfon	X	
Baladeulyn		
Nefyn	X	
Neigwl		
Pwllheli		X
Dolbenmaen	X	
Trefriw		

Meirioneth

Prysor	X
Ystumgwern	
Tal y Bont	X
Pennal	X
Bala	X
Crogen	X

Therefore excluding the six Anglesey sites, only four sites from the above list appear not to have Mottes located in the area of the commotal centre (the final list of sites does not exactly correspond with the first year's list).

The case for the continued use of mottes well in to the thirteenth century and beyond has been convincingly argued by Spurgeon (Spurgeon 1987); Owain Glyn Dwr's hall at the motte at Sycharth is a well known case in point. In Clwyd the commotal court of Ceirnmeirch at Ystradowen known as Llys Gwenllian was located within the bailey of the motte and was described in A Survey of 1334 (Jones 1991 194). Indeed the striking incidence of mottes at commotal centres becomes even more apparent when these are viewed in both Clwyd and Gwynedd (Jones 1991).

While the use of mottes outside Gwynedd well into the thirteenth century is often discussed, there appears to be a remarkable reluctance to address the same issue in Gwynedd itself, despite numerous contemporary references. For instance the mottes at Bala and Crogen were both captured by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in 1202 and probably retained in use. The remains of a fourteenth century hall house adjacent to the motte at Crogen is a probable indicator of continuous occupation of the site, as is the recently excavated Hall at Pen y Mwd Aber adjacent to the motte. The sequence at Marford and Llys Gwenllian are similar examples. The reference in *Brut* to King John building castles in Gwynedd (1210-1211) might possibly refer to mottes.

Indeed Llywelyn's predecessors Owain Gwynedd and his brother Cadwaladr were active in raising new earthwork castles. In Clwyd, Owain built the motte at Tomen y Rhodwydd in 1149 and captured the mottes at Basingwerk in 1166, Prestatyn and Rhuddlan in 1167. He is also credited with building a motte at Corwen in 1165. Cadwaladr is credited with building two ringworks at Castell Cynfal (Mer.) in 1147 and Llanrhystyd (Cards.) in 1149 (Spurgeon 1987). The evidence for the construction and continued use of mottes into the thirteenth century is convincing and the later sites "show a higher proportion of recorded sites in Welsh hands than earlier, including former Norman sites... Only Anglesey and Caernarfonshire have no late earthwork sites, and most of those that are known are to be found in areas with few masonry castles (Spurgeon 1987 32). Montgomery has five mottes, Mathrafal, 1212, Talfolwen, 1244, Llanfyllin, 1257, Welshpool, 1299, and Hen Domen, c 1300. Ceredigion has six, the ringwork at Old Aberystwyth, 1221, and the mottes of Ysgubor y Coed, 1206, Dinerth, 1210, Nant yr Arian, 1216, Trefilan, 1233, and Garth Grugyn, 1242" (Spurgeon 1987 32). Spurgeon's list includes sites known to have been built of new in the thirteenth century and earlier sites with evidence for continued use. Other sites might also be added to this list such as the mottes at Rhuddlan and Coleshill which were repaired in 1241 and 1244 respectively (Spurgeon 1991 161).

Slight hints also survive that suggest that a number of Gwynedd's mottes may possibly have possessed masonry keeps, (see for example the gazetteer entries for Aber, Prysor and Dolbenmaen). The lack of contemporary references to many of these sites need not cause too much concern, as Carr has pointed out in the context of Anglesey "Since Anglesey formed part of the nucleus of Gwynedd it is not surprising that it is not as well documented during this period as are many parts of the march or the more peripheral areas of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's principality" (Carr 1982 51). A close study of Edward I's itinerary also suggests that sites deemed by recent observers to have been redundant by the late thirteenth century such as Prysor and Dolbenmaen may still have acted as residences in this period. Post-conquest documentation suggests that most of these sites were recognised as manors by the Edwardian surveyors.

CHURCHES AND MAERDREFI

"Although churches were near bond communities, few of the latter had their own" (Carr 1982 37). Carr points out that only Llanllibio among the Anglesey *tir cyfrif* townships had a church although at the same time he draws attention to the recent investigations which suggests that most churches were in fact established near existing bond communities (The relationship between churches and townships is a subject requiring further work). This sits uneasily with the law books which state that the consecration of a church in a bond township made it free. The relationship between churches and townships is a subject requiring further investigation.

Thus many of the churches located adjacent to the probable court/*llys* sites, such as St Beuno's at Aberffraw or St Peter's at Rhosyr or possibly Capel Halen at Penrhoslligwy and Capel y Temlwydd at Ystumgwern, have already been described as private chapels attached to the royal courts. In the last two instances neither church nor settlement appears to have prospered after the abandonment of the court. The surviving churches may subsequently have become parish churches as territorial parishes developed.

The churches at Aberffraw, Aber, and Trefriw, sited as they are in the modern villages of those names, must have formed a part of the pattern of *llys* and village, often with its market and fairs. This pattern may suggest that many of the Welsh *maerdrefi* were in the organisation of their component parts comparable with contemporary English manorial villages. The significance of these "surviving" villages will be considered below.

However a number of sites suggests that this pattern was by no means always the norm. The *Llys* at Caernarfon was possibly some distance from the church at Llanbeblig (if it was indeed based at the motte located within the later Edwardian castle). The new borough which

replaced the Welsh settlement did not establish a church within the town walls until 1307. The tradition that Llywelyn ab Iorwerth established a church at Trefriw because of the inconvenience of attending the existing church at Llanrhychwyn some distance away also suggests that the village and royal hall were not originally located adjacent to a convenient place of worship. The relationship between the church of Llanbadrig and the possible site of the *llys* at Cemaes, if this was indeed near the present village of that name, is another possible case in point, as is the location of the church at Pwllheli (St Deneio) some distance north of the medieval borough. It might therefore be possible from the admittedly slight evidence to suggest that not all the commotal centres would have been located adjacent to a church. A number of the commotal centres, sited to maximise coastal or riparian may have originally been some distance from the nearest ecclesiastical centre. The early churches at Llangadwaladr and Eglwys yn Rhos, some distance from the *llys* complexes at Aberffraw and Degannwy might represent the norm in the early medieval period, with private chapels and parish churches only developing much later. Further work on the relationship between established churches and the commotal centres may shed more light on this matter.

LLYS LOCATIONS AND SURVIVING VILLAGES

"Why do villages die? in fact most bond communities which existed in medieval Wales have vanished, they only survived where there were conditions conducive to their survival," (Carr 1982 34). It is the relationship between modern villages and their medieval predecessors that may be of particular importance when considering the location of a *llys*. Aberffraw, Abergwyngregyn and Trefriw provide examples. It should already be apparent that many of the commotal centres already possessed a number of characteristics of small nucleated centres, *llys/court*, church and bond settlement with its market and fairs. Many were also located in coastal positions which were conducive to commerce; the villagers were therefore not wholly dependent on agricultural activities. A number of these sites were officially recognised by the English crown as market towns in their respective localities during the fourteenth century, for example Bangor, Trefriw, Towyn, Dolgellau and Aberffraw (Lewis 1912 175). If these are indeed surviving medieval settlements, as they almost certainly must be, then surely it is the growth and expansion of these villages (massively accelerated since the mid nineteenth century) that forms the major threat to the archaeological resource. In some instances these settlements may have expanded in the post-medieval period; at Pwllheli for example the probable location of the *llys* may long since have been overwhelmed. At Aberffraw the probable site of the *llys* may only have been developed in the 1950s and 1960s. At Aber and Trefriw, where the *llysoedd* may have been spared from the expansion of the village, both sites have been subject to recent planning applications as these open spaces become more and more desirable as development locations.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

The administration of the pre-conquest Welsh landscape was based on territorial units known as *cantrefi* (one hundred townships), *cwmwds* (commotes) and *trefi* (townships). The *cantref*, possibly the oldest unit, had by the thirteenth century been largely replaced as an administrative unit by the smaller *cwmwd* = commote. A *cantref* comprised two or three commotes within its boundary, thus for example the *cantref* of Llyn was made up of the three commotes of Dinllaen, Afloegion and Cymydmaen. The commotes were in turn divided into townships, "the basic unit of settlement" and the principal unit of taxation. Within each commote there existed one township which contained the commotal centre or *Llys*. These townships are often referred to as *maerdrefi*, "the *maerdref* was essentially the Welsh equivalent of the demesne" (Carr 1971-2 175). The term *maerdref* can also be used to refer specifically to the nucleated settlement of the bondmen of the township located next to the *Llys*. As well as the commotal centre the prince would have according to the law books a *ffridd/vaccary* within each commote. These were still retained in the direct control of the princes in the thirteenth century (Stephenson 1984 61). In many instances there is also a close relationship in the siting of stone castles and the *ffriddoedd*.

Llys Buildings

The Welsh law books of the twelfth and thirteenth century refer to the layout of the *llys*, in which up to nine buildings were maintained by the bondsmen of the commote. These usually include a hall, chamber, kitchen, stable, granary or barn, kennels and privy (Butler 1987). The number of buildings vary according to text; in Llyfr Colan two of the buildings are located in the *maerdref*. The Edwardian extents possibly provide a more realistic account of the court buildings (relevant references are included in the gazetteer).

Some of the court buildings were maintained by the English crown in the early fourteenth century. Others were however dismantled, such as Llywelyn's Hall at Conwy, repaired between 1302-6 and dismantled and moved to Caernarfon castle in 1315, or the hall at Ystumgwern which was dismantled and moved to the inner ward of Harlech castle in 1307. At Aberffraw 198 pieces of timber from the court buildings were removed to Caernarfon castle in 1317. Court buildings at Aber were repaired in 1304 and at Nefyn and Pwllheli in 1306. Some of these repairs were probably in preparation for Prince Edward's intended visit in 1306. As A D Carr has already said "there was really little use for the Court buildings after 1282" (Carr 1982 152), neither is there any extant evidence to show that there was any attempt to maintain the buildings beyond the fourteenth century; most of the labour services owed on the court buildings appear to have been fairly quickly commuted to money payments.

The Village

Other details which possibly throw some light on the layout of the *maerdref* refer to the accommodation of the King's retinue within certain houses adjacent to the court. For example the head of the household was to be accommodated in the largest and most central house in the *tref* and the Steward was expected to reside in lodgings nearest to the court. "The settlement which contained the King's court and which thus served as a commote capital, was inhabited by members of all social groups from the highest to the lowest. It is likely therefore to have been a village" (Jones 1985 161).

Sections in the laws which refer to the fines payable if fire should spread from one house to another (inferring nucleation) and the notion that the smithy or kiln ought to be sited 40 feet from other hamlet houses all reinforce Jones's interpretation. As well as Sections of the laws, other contemporary records also suggest that many of the *maerdrefi* will have been nucleated.

A number of the *maerdrefi* had certainly achieved something equivalent to borough status by the thirteenth century, "they (towns) were often located at or near native bond vills (W. *maerdrefi*): the existence of a nucleated settlement and the demands of a royal court provided a favourable context for Urban growth, especially when supplemented by the opportunities offered by coastal trade and fishing" (Davies 1987 165).

In Gwynedd the most successful of these emerging towns were Llanfaes, Nefyn and Pwllheli. Davies suggests that other small proto-urban communities were beginning to emerge elsewhere, at Caernarfon and Trefriw for example. Indeed, the available evidence strongly suggests that a number of the *maerdrefi* were acquiring many of the characteristics of the pro-urban Communities. Many of these developments were officially recognised in the post-conquest Period. Aberffraw, for example, held markets and fairs from the 1330s. Markets and fairs were also established at Aber and Trefriw. Lewis described these settlements as smaller market towns (Lewis 1912, 175 177 180 194).

Similar signs of nucleation can be found at Degannwy, which was granted Borough status by Henry III, and at Rhosyr where a fair and market were established prior to the Edwardian conquest (Carr 1982 258).

Tenorial Arrangements

The usual bond tenures in pre conquest Gwynedd were *tir cyfrif*, *tir gwelyog*, and *maerdref* tenure, which was equivalent to *tre cyfrif* tenure. *Tir gwelyog* tenure was the least restrictive form of bond tenure and the bondsmen enjoyed the same rights to succession to *gwely* lands as freemen. *Tir cyfrif* tenure was a more restrictive form and the bondmen's holdings were liable to be reallocated by the Prince's officials. The bond community was also liable for the whole burden of dues even if there was a fall in the number of tenants. Bondmen on the *maerdref* owed the highest amount of labour services on the prince's demesne. The *tre cyfrif* townships tended to be located close to the commotal centres.

All the above tenures could at least by the fourteenth century be found within the township containing the commotal centre. At Aberffraw for example there was a mixed vill with both bond and free tenants; "the *maerdref* was a bond township but by the fourteenth century it could include several kinds of tenure" (Carr 1982 132). Some of these changes can be seen to have occurred after the Edwardian conquest for example the emergence of a class of tenants known as *gwyr tir bwrdd* who "emerged it seems, as the result of demesne leasing after the conquest" (Stephenson 1984 59). Other tenures within the townships were probably present prior to the conquest. Jones Pierce believed this appearance of newer settlements or tenures within the *maerdref* townships came about as a result of the prince's right to exploit the waste (Jones Pierce 1972 278). Further, the townships containing the commotal centres on Anglesey at least, were the largest townships in the island, often being as large as several thousand acres. "a large part of which was waste and pasture..." the bond community enjoyed a customary right of common pasture, the waste was in law regarded as *diffaith brenin*, the prince's waste and it could be exploited in the royal interest" (Jones Pierce 1972 277). The individual entries in the gazetteer for each township discusses the other tenures by which parts of the township were settled ie for example the *liber nativi* in the township of Rhosyr.

Demesne Lands

As well as the waste and properties held by some of the less restrictive forms of tenure in the township, there were the demesne lands. On Anglesey these are recorded to be a combined total of thirty-six carucates of demesne lands with appurtenant meadows and gardens in the five Anglesey manors (at sixty acres a carucate a total of 2160 acres). Even where a borough had replaced the *maerdref* as at Llanfaes and Pwllheli, the demesne was still a "directly exploited resource of the princes" (Stephenson 1984 57). At Pwllheli for example there were three carucates of demesne and at Llanfaes thirteen carucates.

In pre-conquest North Wales demesne farming was an integral part of the "manorial system" Stephenson says of the Prince's demesne lands that "these were being intensively exploited in the thirteenth century... the principal demesne lands were generally located close to the commotal *llys* and where one survived the *maerdref*" (Stephenson 1984 57).

There are a number of factors which suggest that there may have been little intention on the part of the new Edwardian administration to maintain any direct demesne farming following the conquest (see the section on Boroughs below). Glanville Jones suggests that "the commutation of labour services into cash rentals meant that the manorial demesne could not be worked as before. Already by the early fourteenth century parts of the demesne lands were farmed out to English officials or leased to various tenants" (Jones 1955 83).

The Boroughs

The most significant change to the layout of the commotal centres was the establishment of new boroughs by Edward I. "Royal boroughs usually flourished on the Royal demesne.... All were established on sites, and endowed with lands, closely associated with the royal past. The lands of the old Welsh maenors were in some cases supplemented by the bond and escheat lands of the commote over which the Royal will was supreme.... The municipal lands were

accordingly as far as possible, taken out of the royal rather than the private property of the North Welsh principality.... The aggregate lands of the borough of Nefyn and Pwllheli tally with the territoria of the old manors". The resulting borough boundaries were areas of land "marked off from the rest of the county by its definite metes and bounds" (Lewis 1912 43 44).

In one way or another many of the commotal centres seem to have been affected by the establishment of Edward's boroughs. At Llanfaes the whole Welsh town and demesne lands were absorbed in the new borough boundary of Beaumaris. The residents of Llanfaes were in turn settled on the old demesne lands at Rhosyr. Further afield parts of the demesne at Ystumgwern were incorporated into the borough property of Harlech. At Bala the new borough was established partly on the old royal demesne, conversely at Conwy part of the *maerdref* lands were situated within the borough boundary and retained a separate administrative identity of their own.

Guide to maps in the Gazetteer.

Where possible parish boundaries as shown on mid nineteenth century tithe maps have been transferred on to modern OS maps. Information on the relationship of the township boundaries to parish boundaries is shown where known. Further information on landholdings are plotted using tithe maps and estate maps or, when not available, estate rentals. Where the available evidence is incomplete or inconclusive, the maps are reproduced in the hope that they may prove useful for further work. Sites mentioned in the text are highlighted and the extent of scheduled areas shown.

DISCUSSION

A number of arguments put forward in the report need to be considered. It has been suggested for instance that a number of earthwork castles may have been the locations of the commotal centres. To date there has been no archaeological investigation of such sites in Gwynedd, neither has statutory protection been extended beyond the immediate castle mound in most instances. Excavations adjacent to the motte at Pen y Mwd Aber have shown the potential of these sites and the extension of statutory protection should be considered. It is unlikely that any progress will be made concerning their function in the thirteenth century, without excavation on a significant scale.

There are a number of villages in Gwynedd which owe their existence to the medieval bond settlements of the pre-conquest period. Only Aberffraw among them has received any kind of archaeological attention. As the identification of deserted medieval settlements in Gwynedd has yet to be properly investigated, more archaeological assessment is required at these surviving villages.

The identification of the probable *llys* locations in Gwynedd might be seen as a starting point for further work rather than as an end in itself. A number of threats to the survival of what could be described as among the most important high status archaeological sites in Gwynedd have been identified, among which village expansion may be the most damaging. At Aberffraw, Pwllheli and Cemaes the damage has already been done. The gazetteer entries suggest possible recommendations for further work at each site. At Nefyn for example the reference to the construction of new ovens for the tournament held in 1284 would appear to offer an ideal case for magnetometer survey on the target area. Even small scale assessment excavations at Cae Llys Rhosyr and Pen y Mwd Aber provided worthwhile results which were subsequently followed up by larger scale excavations. Should further work be undertaken at Cae Llys Rhosyr it may at last be possible to retrieve a substantial body of information on the form and evolution of a *llys* complex.

There are a number of other aspects to the study that might have longer term research potential. The identification, in admittedly cartographic form, of township boundaries might prove a worthwhile project for fieldwork and trial trenching, and provide valuable information

on the form and date of landscape divisions in the medieval period. Finally the report has shown how the eclipse of the Welsh administrative system by the Edwardian boroughs has rendered a number of these sites vulnerable to a whole range of potentially damaging developments. With this in mind there may be scope for considering an extension of the *"llys"* and *maerdref* project beyond the confines of Gwynedd.

ABER

Commote of Arllechwedd Uchaf
NGR SH 659 729

Located on the north coast of Gwynedd at the estuary of the Aber river, at a point where the ancient packhorse, Roman and prehistoric road, crossing the uplands from the Conwy valley came down on to the coastal plain. The Aber valley is dominated by the Iron Age hillfort Maes y Gaer.

EARLY HISTORY

An undocumented motte stands central to the present village on the west bank of the river. The Motte is a particularly fine example 36.5m in diameter at its base and 6.7m high. The church of St Bodfan's which may be an early foundation lies 300m further west. Aber is often referred to as a favourite residence of the Princes of Gwynedd in the thirteenth century (Davies 1987 119).

Joan, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's wife died at Aber in 1237 as did his son Dafydd ap Llywelyn in 1246 (Thomas Jones 1955 235 239). Llywelyn ap Gruffydd is known to have stayed at Aber in March of 1274 and December of 1276 (Stephenson 1984 233). Edward I stayed at Aber from August 22 - 28 in 1284.

LLYS BUILDINGS

References to the Court buildings are to be found in a number of post-conquest documents.

Arch Camb 1863 P192 Nov 6 1289

"An act to repay Robert de Slaundon the sum of £20 which he expended in rebuilding the houses of Aber and Bala which had been unfortunately destroyed by fire".

PRO E101 485/30 (1303-4)

"In preparing the site of the Hall and Chamber (at Aber) at task 8/- To Masons supplying carriage of stone, setters, porters, and in carriage of sand at task by William of Kyrkby and Ithell of Bangor masons in the third year of Prince Edward £17. 9s.3d.

Further expenses laid out on the works of the Hall and Chamber of the Lord Prince at Aber in the sixth year of Prince Edward, by the hands of Richard of Hokenhall (? Hucknall), namely:-

In carriage of four boatloads of stone from the sea to Aber at task, at (several) times 4/-. And to hiring two carts with two horses and two boys (or grooms) for carrying stones of freestone, lime and sand, for fifty-seven working days 28/6d. That is each taking 3d. a day."

LATER HISTORY OF THE MANOR

In 1287 the manor of Aber was granted to Henry Somur for five years. In 1323 the manor

was held by Edmond de Dynieton, in 1327 by David of Overton and in 1330 by John de Houseum. In 1390 Henry de Coton claimed title to the manor of Aber the manor was seized by the Prince's Escheator and Henry de Coton was compensated with the grant of the manor of Walton upon Trent. In 1417 the manor was granted to John de Pont and in 1437 a petition for a grant of the manor provides for the maintenance of the houses, woods, closes and gardens appertaining to the manor (Rees 1975 61 167 323 451-2). In 1484 the manor of Aber together with the manor of Kemmaes (Cemaes) were granted to Richard Vaughan (UCNW MS 21275 BM Harley MS 433).

There then follows a series of disputes over the lessee of the manor of Aber and Cemaes. In 1551 the lessee was Ryce Thomas and in 1610 William Thomas purchased the manors of Aber and Cemaes (UCNW MS 21281 + Plas Coch MS 3263 - 3300). By 1689 the manor had passed to the Bulkleys of Baron Hill (see Baron Hill MS 4726, 4727, 4728 etc), and by 1863 the property was sold to the Penrhyn Estate (Penrhyn MS 1180, 2872 etc).

Antiquarian References

By comparison with many of the other sites discussed in this report there is a fairly large collection of antiquarian references referring to the remains of the *Llys* at Aber. The references mainly concern two locations, the site of the motte known as Pen y Mwd and the site of the late or post medieval house called Pen y Bryn. (Several references manage to combine both the motte and Pen y Bryn into one site).

Leland's Itinerary (1530'S)

The moode in the parish of Aber otherwise Llan Boduan wher Tussog Lluelin uab Gerwerde Trundon had a castle or palace on a hill by the Chirch, wherof yet parte stondith.

Pennant Tours in Wales (1778)

At the entrance of the glen close to the village, is a very large artificial mount, flat at top, and near sixty feet in diameter, widening towards the base. It was once the site of a castle belonging to Llywelyn the Great. Some foundations are yet to be seen round the summit, and in digging traces of buildings have been discovered.

Nicolas Carlyle: Topographical Dictionary of Wales (1811)

In the village is an artificial mound of earth about 15 feet high and about 15 yards in diameter nearly circular, the interior of it has not been investigated, but it is supposed to contain the remains of some of the welsh Princes who had a palace at Aber. A small portion of old building is pointed out near this mound as the only remaining vestige of the palace of Llywelyn ap Iorweth drwyndyn the last prince who resided at Aber.

Cambrian Tourist (1821)

Near the bridge is a circular mount seemingly artificial, which was the foundation of a small castle, probably constructed of timber, as many of the welsh fortresses were: vestiges of the moat and its feeder from the river still remain.

" Traces of buildings have been discovered near this spot, which were probably the remains of the princes palace, as the inhabitants still pretend to show strangers the foundations of the old kitchen.

C Frederick Cliffe The Book of North Wales (1850)

At the mouth of a rapid stream (up which salmon run) is an artificial mount the site of an ancient watch tower, locally called "Llewelyns Kitchen". The palace of Llywelyn and some of his predecessors stood near the house with a round gable tower, called Pen y Bryn, part of

which was built in Henry VIII's reign by Sir William Thomas Knight Banneret, an old warrior.

Cathedral Wanderings in North Wales (1851)

In the mouth of the defile, near the village, stands a great artificial mound, the site in other days, of one of Llywelyn's palaces. Many years ago some antiquarian by excavating for the purpose, discovered several of its many substructions.

Arch Camb (1860)

The tumulus at Aber is of military character and was once surmounted by defences probably of wood. It may have been connected with the palace Llywelyn the Great is said to have had in this place ...

The only other object of interest is the house at Pen y Bryn, a defensive structure, partially of the sixteenth century, part of which consists of a small square tower of semi defensive character.

T Nicholas 1872 Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales (1871)

The castle of the princes of Gwynedd at Aber has nearly disappeared. The date of its origin is entirely unknown. The mound on which it stood, close to the village, is visible, with traces of motte surrounding it; fragments of clotted masonry lie about in the fences; but no walls remain, unless buried in the mound. On top of the hillock is now a kitchen garden, and the cottagers grow their potatoes about the foot of it with happy unconsciousness that they are dealing too familiar terms with an historic spot.

Three Days in Aber Village (1874)

"you find yourself in a few minutes more before a huge barbaric Round Tower, the principle and almost only vestige of Llywelyn's Castle at the present day. Attached to this tower is a most romantic structure, almost as barbarous looking as the tower itself, and built entirely, we are told of the ruins of the ancient palace. It is at present used as a farm house....At the further end of the cavern, or cellar or prison or what ever it had been, I could perceive the commencement of a subterranean passage, which led I was afterwards informed, to some solitary spot in the glen.

The Old Churches of Snowdonia H Hughes H L North (1924)

Before leaving Aber Pen y Bryn should be visited. It is traditionally the house of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd. The present house possibly built upon earlier foundations, dates from the sixteenth century, but the base of the tower is much more ancient. The barn to the left has some rows of small split windows with flat heads and broadly splayed jambs inside, composed of large pieces of Anglesey grit stone, triangular on plan. Whether they are in their original position or whether they were brought from the tower, cannot now be stated, but it is quite possible that they are genuine Welsh work of the thirteenth century. Most unfortunately they have been partly blocked up a few years ago. The building is like a small edition of the great barn at Vaynol dated 1604.

Bezant Lowe The Heart of Northern Wales 1927

On a slight eminence near Aber stands Pen y Bryn, a fine old house said to have been built on the site of the palace of Llywelyn the great, where resided several of the Welsh Princes. Leland, in his Itinerary, referring to Llywelyn ap Iorwerth says "He had a house in the wood on a hill, in the parish of Aber, part of which now standeth". Traditionally it is said to have been connected with a mound, presumably the "Mwd," near to the entrance of the Glen.

Although the actual site of Y Ty Hir cannot now be precisely located, this ancient seat of the princes of Gwynedd was probably situated on or near the elevated site now occupied by the house known as Pen y Bryn.

Leyland's reference to the moode (the Norman Motte) listed under the heading Castelles in Cair Arvonshire is the earliest reference to the *Llys* at Aber. Pennant and others clearly follow Leyland in referring to the remains visible adjacent to the motte. The earliest reference to Pen y Bryn occurs in 1851 although in 1871 the motte continued to be associated with the site of the *Llys* although it would appear that the building foundations referred to in earlier accounts were no longer visible. By and large from the 1870s onwards speculation concerning the location of the *Llys* is directed at Pen y Bryn. There are some exceptions to this trend, for example Sir J E Lloyd "In the village of Aber a motte marks the situation of the Prince's Court the Ty Hir, or Long House, which was the royal hall..." (Lloyd 1937 204). In 1956 the RCAHMW thought it "possible that it (the *llys*) stood on or near the motte Pen y Mwd (RCAHM 1956 2).

Maps

It has not proved possible to locate any early estate maps for Aber. The tithe map for Aber contains important information on the township boundaries within the parish.

Surface fieldwork

see excavation report

Geophysical survey

There are a number of surveys at Tyn y Mwd, see appendix.

Assessment excavation

Excavations have been conducted at both Pen y Mwd and Pen y Bryn, see enclosed report. In addition the RCAHMW has conducted a further survey at Pen y Bryn.

INTERPRETATION

The ecclesiastical parish of Aber contains the manor of Aber the township of Wig and the free township of Bodsilyn. The boundaries of the manor can be traced on the Tithe map (see also Jones Pierce 1962). The modern village of Aber represents the survival of the medieval hamlet which in the late thirteenth century consisted of a community of twenty-four families. In the fourteenth century markets and fairs at Aber were legally recognised by the English crown (Lewis 1912 175, 177, 180, 194).

The identification of a three unit hall house at Pen y Mwd is a significant step towards the recognition of the individual units which would have comprised a *Llys* complex.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Scheduled status has been extended to include the two fields adjacent to the motte containing the hall house. A management agreement is in place with the SNP. A fuller excavation report is in preparation by GAT. The excavator suggested that there were sealed deposits on the north end of the hall house. Should there be any further controversy concerning the location of the *Llys* at Aber then further limited excavation would probably be capable of resolving this point.

ABERFFRAW

Commote of Malltraeth
NGR SH 354 689

Located on the west bank of the Ffraw near its estuary at the south-west corner of Anglesey.

EARLY HISTORY

Aberffraw has long been regarded as the chief seat of the kingdom of Gwynedd in the early middle ages. One of the earliest indications of this association may be Gildas' sixth century reference to Maelgwn, King of Gwynedd as the "island dragon". The existence of an early seventh century inscribed stone commemorating Cadfan, (Nash-Williams 1950, no.13) "wisest and most renowned of all Kings" at Llangadwaladr indicates a royal burial ground and probably implies a royal court in the vicinity from at least the later seventh century when Cadwaladr, Cadfan's grandson, established a religious community there some two miles from Aberffraw. A Viking raid on Aberffraw is recorded in 968 and from the twelfth century, bardic tradition consistently recognised the tradition of Aberffraw as the pre-eminent royal court of Wales.

LLYS BUILDINGS

Most of the available evidence for the court buildings at Aberffraw come from Edwardian extents and accounts of English Royal Officials.

Edward 1 stayed at Aberffraw in July 1283.

In 1317 198 pieces of timber were shipped to Caernarfon Castle "from the hall and other buildings of the late Prince Llywelyn at Aberffraw" (Taylor 1974 386). In 1337 "a new tiled roof was added to the King's Chamber (Carr 1982 123).

The extent of 1352 provides further information on the layout of the court complex, tenants of the commote of Malltraeth were expected to maintain the hall, chamber, animal house, privy, rhaglaw's chamber and to repair the walls and gate of the Court (CARR 1971-2 172 188).

As with many other Court complexes, there was little use for the court buildings after 1282 and many of the building works required were commuted to money payments, such was the case at Aberffraw after 1352 (Carr 1982 152).

POST CONQUEST ADMINISTRATION

The customary rents of the tenants of the maerdref of Aberffraw were recorded in the extent of 1284 and again in the revised extent of 1352. Aberffraw, like Cemaes, Penrhoslligwy and Rhosfair, is often accounted for separately in crown administrative documentation (see Ministers Accounts from Edward II to Henry VIII). The profits of justice and fines from prisoners were farmed separately by both local Welshmen and English burgesses. Details of farms of Aberffraw are known for 1350-1, 1359-60, 1376-7 (farmed by the local community) and 1392 and 1473-4 (farmed by William Bulkeley of Beaumaris) (Carr 1982 86 310).

LATER HISTORY

Much of the following interpretation is based on the identification of the maerdref as an actual hamlet located next to the court complex and not as may have been previously suggested a

term applied to the entire township.

Two local families, the Owens of Bodowen (Bodeon) and the Meyricks of Bodorgan were most active in acquiring the crown leases of Aberffraw (T Roberts 1989 19).

Documents relating to Crown leases of Aberffraw

EPCWTJ1 (Jeffreys Jones 1955 17)

144/81/11 JacI p17

Names six hamlets of Aberffraw, Treberveth, Kevn Treffrw, Trecastell, Tynllwydan, Trefry and Maerdref as well as providing an important list of field names in the hamlet of Maerdref. The Crown farmer is William Owen of Bodowen.

144/73/9 Jac I p13

William Owen son of Sir Huw Owen of Bodeon (Bodowen) holds lease of Maerdref Garddey and Trecastell.

144/88/11 Jac I p20

Hamlets of Maerdreff and Garthey dispute between lessee, William Owen of Bodeon (Bodowen) and Tristram Bulkley.

see also RCAWM (Lewis, Conway Davies 1954 12 14) for the Meyricks interests in the Parish of Aberffraw (1552).

In 1608 the Crown Survey of Anglesey and Caernarfon (PRO LR2 205) states that the whole of the demesne was held by Sir William Owen (ie demesne being hamlet of Garddau and Maerdref) among his forty-one sub tenants Tristan Bulkley, William Owen and Richard Meyrick held parcels in Maes y Maerdref. Again an important list of field and house names in the hamlet of Maerdref are contained in this survey.

In 1628 Charles I conveyed certain lands to the Corporation of London including Crown lands in Anglesey and Caernarvonshire. Of these the hamlets of Maerdreff, Garthay and Trecastle were sold by the corporation to Henry Williams in July 1629 (RCE Sales Contract 1628 - 1677 P19).

There then occurs a gap in the available documentation concerning Maerdref Aberffraw until the 1770s when the collection of Pool papers (Caernarfon Record Office) provide details on the Owens of Bodowens holdings in Aberffraw see for example Pool MS 2024 for a Summary of the property of Sir Huw Williams, Bart in the Manor of Aberffraw and for correspondence regarding holding the manorial court (Pool MS 1376, 1332, 1663-41 etc).

TOPOGRAPHICAL RECONSTRUCTION

A combination of the estate survey of the Owen's property in Aberffraw together with the information provided in the eighteenth century land tax for Aberffraw parish (Llangefni MS LIQ+/1/1) and the tithe map can be used to produce a topographical reconstruction of the Medieval divisions of the township.

The following divisions are referred to in the Land tax:

Llain y dref
Bodveirig
Penrhyn

Cefn treffro
Bodgedwydd
Henllys
Grugor
Tindryfol
Tinllwydan

The Parish of Aberffraw contains elements of three medieval townships Aberffraw, Dindryfwl and Rhosmor, each of which extends beyond the Parish boundary, an element not often seen elsewhere. Other than Henllys and Penrhyn, which are not noted in the extent of 1352, the divisions used in the eighteenth century land tax represent the administrative units of the medieval landscape. By plotting the field names known from the hamlet of Maerdref, it becomes apparent that llain y dref corresponds to the medieval hamlet of Maerdref. The juxtaposition of the units listed in the eighteenth century land tax together with information on land ownership enables a reconstruction of the boundaries of the different medieval hamlets within the parish. Of particular interest is the inclusion of Bwlan under Cefntreffraw to the east of the village, Cefntreffraw has previously been located to the north of the village. The use of natural features such as streams, and man-made features like roads, as boundary features is of particular interest and would be worthy of further study.

The results are plotted in Fig.....

The Owens of Bodowen sold most of their Anglesey possessions in both Aberffraw and Newborough in 1815 to Lord Dinorben. This and other sales of land to the Meyricks in the early eighteenth century have been taken into account in the above discussion.

Maps

OS
Bodorgan estate survey MS 1588,1872
LLus Dulas MS 53 estate survey 1816
Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

The village of Aberffraw has undergone considerable expansion since it was first mapped in the early nineteenth century. The majority of the agricultural land around the village is intensively cultivated, and there is little in the way of surviving earthworks.

Geophysical

Assessment Excavation

There have been a number of excavations at Aberffraw, plotted in fig xx. A number of locations have been suggested for the site of the *Llys*, the OS map of ... located the court at SH 349086860. The site was trial-trenched by Hague in 1957 as well as SH 34956850 but nothing relating to the *Llys* Complex was found. Hague's excavations were probably conducted in this location because of the antiquarian references to remains of the *llys* still visible on the south-west of the village in the mid nineteenth century.

By the 1950s the village had already expanded westwards and Hague's trenches were therefore too far to the west. R B White and D Longley have recently suggested that the village of Aberffraw might possibly stand on the site of a Roman fort with a possible later phase of bank and ditch (report forthcoming). This in turn has been interpreted as locating the site of the thirteenth century court below the site of the present village centred on the present village square (Jones 1989).

THE MODERN VILLAGE

The medieval village of Aberffraw has survived due to a number of factors. Like Nefyn and Pwllheli its coastal location allowed its inhabitants to pursue occupations not wholly tied to agriculture (Jones 1985 168 + Carr 1982 133). Markets and fairs were held at Aberffraw from at least 1330 and fairs are known to have been held there in the late sixteenth century (Lewis 1912 180, Richards 1972 67). In 1608 the hamlet of Aberffraw contained thirty-two houses and five cottages (PRO LR 2 205 PRO). The earliest extant map for Aberffraw of 1777 shows the village clustered around Bodorgan Square and the "topography and layout of the modern village make it certain that this was the site of the medieval settlement" (Edwards + Lane 1988 20). The growth of the village can be charted in comparing the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century estate maps and the OS maps of 1888, 1901 etc. In the fourteenth century and earlier the site of the village/hamlet would have been constrained by the location of the church and the *llys* complex. The following antiquarian references suggest that some elements of *Llys* complex were still visible until fairly recently.

Antiquarian references

Fenton Tours in Wales 1810 p274 p350

"It is said the Palace stood in a [field] at the West back of the village, where some tumps remain, seemingly the foundations of buildings."

There are still some relicts of the Prince's Palace there
No 6 Y Llys, the place where the Palace stood
No 7 Y Gadlys, The Praetorium or the Prince's Court of guard.

A Llwyd A History of the Island of Mona 1833 p176

"Excepting the walls of a barn and Gardd y Llŷs, at the West end of Aberffraw not a vestige remains to mark the spot where are stood the princely residence of the sovereigns of North Wales".

Cambrian Travellers guide 1813 Nicholson p71

"Some trifling remains of the ancient palace are shown in the walls of a building now used as a barn".

S Lewis A Topographical Dictionary of Wales, 1838, p1, 15.

"some trifling remains of the ancient royal palace of the princes of North Wales at Aberffraw are yet shown in the wall of a barn at that place"

Jones H L Arch Camb 1846,p 61

"a faint tradition is preserved by the inhabitants of ancient foundations having been long ago visible in the field north of the church but the antiquary will seek for them in vain. It is also said that subterraneous passages and caves still exist, marking out the site of the royal palace and the ordinance maps even assign a position to an ancient building, on the western side of the church. On enquiring however into this matter upon the spot no sufficiently accurate information has been attainable".

J Cradock Letters from Snowdonia descriptive of a tour through the Northern Counties of North Wales 1770 (quoted in Ramage 19xx 13).

"I was told that part of the wall of the King's Palace was converted into a barn".

Late 18th century survey of Aberffraw (quoted in White 1977 142) (Possibly 1770s)

"Here about anciently stood the Royal Palace of the Princes of North Wales of the Welsh

blood of which at Present Nothing remains - the stones have been carried for making Hedges and for building houses about 30 years ago".

The site marked on the Bodorgan Survey, west of the village is now built over by the 1950s + 1960s housing estate Maes Llywelyn.

There has been some discussion on the significance of the site of a supposed Chapel (Jones 1974 1976). Known as Eglwys Y Beili, "church of the enclosure"

Fenton Tours in Wales 1810

"There is also an old house given by the late Sir Arthur Owen for a school house, said to have been the Chapel to the Royal Mansion".

Llwyd 1833 A History of the Island of Mona

"An old ruin called Eglwys y Baili was repaired in 1729 by Sir Arthur Owen of Bodowen for a school"

The chapel is also mentioned in The Old Monasteries, Abbeys and Chapels of Anglesey (E N Baynes TAAS 1920 p33) and a similar list compiled by Hugh Hughes in 1796.

Mr T Roberts, archivist at UCNW Bangor, has recently drawn attention to a document which states that the school was built on a vacant plot of ground (personal communication).

Manorial Court

The Manorial Court at Aberffraw was held in a house called the Eagles (Dutton 1987) located next door to the supposed site of Eglwys y Beili. The building contained a dated stone in the facade above the front doorway d1729, however the present building may comprise two earlier structures incorporated in the late eighteenth century.

Manorial Courts were variously held in private residence and inns, from at least the sixteenth century, and more certainly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The location of a manorial court at this late date does not necessarily have any relevance to the location of the Medieval Court (Ogwen Williams 1958 30).

INTERPRETATION

If White's postulated ditched enclosure relates in any way to the thirteenth century *llys* then such an interpretation clearly implies a significant shift in the settlement nucleus of the village of Aberffraw to the site previously occupied by the *Llys* Complex. It has yet to be shown however that the nucleus of the medieval village had in any way altered by the eighteenth century when it is first shown on estate maps. Moreover Antiquarian references suggest that the remains of the *Llys* were still visible to the west of the village in the eighteenth century. The rapid growth of the village in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries now overlies the probable location of the *Llys* complex.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aberffraw is one of the most important of the royal settlements of Gwynedd and possibly Wales. However to date there has been little in the archaeological record to confirm the importance of this site. Other than White's possible Roman enclosure/fort, no elements of the high status royal buildings or of structures associated with the bond settlement have been recognised. While any developments within the village are likely to be monitored by the Trust, it appears unlikely that there will be any real opportunity in the near future to undertake

further excavations at Aberffraw. There remain only two avenues open for further work. Firstly the vintage RAF photography of the 1940s should be consulted; this might reveal some information on the area west of the village prior to more recent developments. Secondly, a programme of trial trenching and geophysical survey might be designed to explore any vestigial open spaces in the likely vicinity of the *llys* (however the results of such an exercise may not be very encouraging). Finally, the place name Henllys to the north of the village should not be overlooked. Jones Pierce has suggested that at Pwllheli for instance that there may have been a deliberate shift of focus away from the original *llys* location to a site closer to the coast. There remains the possibility that a similar process may have occurred at Aberffraw.

BALA

Commote of Uwch Tryweryn
NGR SH 926 360

The town of Bala is located on the floodplain close to the confluence of the Dee and Tryweryn at the north end of Llyn Tegid.

EARLY HISTORY

A Roman campaign base and auxiliary fort is located to the east of the town. There are three earthwork castles in the vicinity of Bala. Two of these have no documented history. Castell Gronw is a motte and bailey located on the river Dee at the point where it leaves the lake, and the ringwork known as Pen-uchar-llan lies to the north west of Bala.

The motte known as Tomen y Bala is referred to in Brut y Tywysogion in 1202. In that year Llywelyn dispossessed Elise ap Madog Lord of Penllyn and "having gained possession of the castle at Bala returned happily" (Thomas Jones 1955 185). Llywelyn ap Gruffydd addressed a letter to Edward I from Bala sometime between 1278 and 1282 (Edwards 1935 84).

LLYS BUILDINGS

In the extent of Meirioneth of 1285 a charge of 5 shillings is made upon the commote for the "sustenance of the houses of Bala" (D R T 1884 280). The buildings are next referred to in 1289 when Robert de Slaundon was paid "the sum of £20 which he expended in rebuilding the houses of Aber and Bala which had been unfortunately destroyed by fire" (Ed A C 1863 192). In 1315 the men of Penllyn petitioned that they were being forced to work on the maintenance of the houses and pay five shillings which they previously paid in lieu of their obligation to maintain the buildings of the commote (Rees 1975 101).

LATER HISTORY

The town of Bala was established by Roger de Mortimer in 1310. Of the fifty-four burgage plots laid out thirty-four were on the Royal demesne of Penllyn and the remainder on freehold land. The market of Llanvawr was transferred to Bala in the same year. The burgesses rented what remained of the demesne of Penllyn, the borough property was not very extensive and the borough was dependent on its market and fairs (Lewis 1912 55). The original grant to the burgesses of Bala stipulated that the town should be surrounded with a wall of brick and mortar although there is no evidence to show that the wall was ever built.

During Glyndwr's revolt a garrison place consisting of six houses was apparently established at Bala. These houses were built and maintained by the Crown, they were subsequently leased to Walter Elesmere in 1413 who had to maintain the houses at his own cost. By 1427 the houses are said to have been "long since burnt". The houses were said to have been located in the

garnestura of Bala, surely a reference to the Castle (Lewis 1912 118).

Maps

tithe map
OS

Surface field work

The motte has a base diameter of 40m and is 9m high. The summit of the motte is reached by a winding footpath and has been planted with shrubs and turf. The planned towns consist of a principal main street and to either side a parallel back lane.

Geophysical

Assessment Excavation

INTERPRETATION

Little is known about the archaeological potential of Bala, since there has been no excavation within the town. Nothing is known of the relationship between the Welsh *maerdref*/bond vill and the fourteenth century borough. The location of the royal buildings referred to in the extent of 1285 and the later early fifteenth century garrison is likely to have been adjacent to or possibly on the motte.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A recent watching brief on work being carried out on the reclamation of the old gas works immediately adjacent to the motte recorded a part of the ditch around the base of the motte. At 21 High Street a vacant plot within 50m of the motte may soon come up for planning permission. This and other sites within the planned town of Bala or in the vicinity of the motte should be closely monitored.

BALADEULYN

Commote of Uwch Gwyrfai
NGR SH 509 532

Baladeulyn is the name for the area between the two lakes Llyniau Nantlle in the Nantlle valley (the lower lake was drained in 1893-5). The name may originally have applied to three locations in Caernarvonshire.

EARLY HISTORY

The "manor" of Baladeulyn was in the possession of Einion ap Caradog, one of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's greatest advisors (and Llywelyn's uncle). On the death of Einion's son Tudur ap Einion ap Caradog in 1283, Baladeulyn was seized by the crown (Rees 1975 109 339). In 1301 Baladeulyn is included in the ministers accounts under the township of Pennarth in Uwch Gwyrfai, located north of Clynnog Fawr (U C N W MS 3538). Subsequently in 1303-4 Baladeulyn in Uwch Gwyrfai is referred to as a manerium (BBCS 1934 145). Edward I stayed at Baladeulyn from July 9 to July the 29 in 1284.

The ffridd of Baladeulyn is refer to in 1328 (Rees 1975 254) although it does not say in which commote the ffridd is located. A grant of the ffridd of Baladeulyn in 1566 refers to the

commote of "iscor"(isgwyrfai) and therefore referring to the ffridd near Dolbadarn castle (C.P.R 470 see also PRO SC12/4/20). However the crown property that was usually referred to as y Fridd is probably coterminous with the area seen in the 1777 Faenol estate map of Fridd Baladdaulyn. The extent of the crown property could be easily determined as its boundaries are defined by natural features such as rivers and lakes.

Baladeulyn is located on both Saxton's and Speed's maps at Nantlle. It does however appear as though the name may have applied to more than one location (Bala meaning where a river flows from a lake and deulyn meaning two lakes the term is therefore appropriate for both Nantlle and Dolbadarn). In *Observations on the Snowdon Mountain* (Williams W 1802 31) Baladeulyn is used for both Llanberis and Nantlle. In 1694 Baladeulyn is described as being in Llanllyfni parish (Llwyd E 1911 108). Pennant associated Baladeulyn with the lakes at Nantlle but concluded that "at present all memory is lost of the situation of the town, whose traces might perhaps be discovered after proper search" (Pennant 1778 189. Fenton, no doubt following in Pennant's footsteps also visited the site (Fenton 1810 232).

LATER HISTORY

While documentation concerning crown lands in Nantlle has proved somewhat elusive, sufficient information on the post-conquest history of the area can be deduced from local histories. It would appear that Tudur ap Gronw was granted crown lands at Baladeulyn for his services to the English crown, sometime in the mid fourteenth century (the reference though vague appears to suggest that this was a grant of six carucates). The property remained in the hands of his descendants and was eventually acquired in the nineteenth century by the Hughes family of Kinnel. The extent of the property can be plotted from the 1840's tithe map.

W R Ambrose writing in 1871 states that "all tradition in the neighbourhood record that the *llys* was the old building which stood behind Nantlle, known as the kitchen, and this was demolished about fifteen years ago. The building had the appearance of great antiquity from its build and plan" (Ambrose 1872 25). The present farmhouse at Nantlle known as Ty Mawr is a sixteenth century hall house, two further buildings were shown on the 1840s tithe map.

Maps

1840s Tithe Map

Surface Field Work

INTERPRETATION

It appears as though the Fridd of Baladeulyn retained a separate administrative identity from the demesne until it was at some stage incorporated into the Vaynol estate. The demesne possibly comprising six carucates was granted to Tudur ap Gronw in the mid fourteenth century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Geophysical survey and trial trenching at Ty Mawr farm.

CAERNARFON

NGR SH 478 628

Caernarfon is located on a peninsula projecting from the south shore of the Menai Straits,

between the estuaries of the Cadnant and Seiont Rivers.

EARLY HISTORY

There is a scatter of prehistoric findspots surrounding the area of the present town and some suggestion of prehistoric activity at Twt Hill, but the earliest known settlement dates from the Roman period, commencing about 80 AD.

SEGONTIUM

Approximately 800m to the south-east of Caernarfon, the Romans established an auxiliary fort (double strength cohort) called Segontium, with a harbour and stores compound (Hen Waliau) constructed to the south-west on the bank of the River Seiont. Archaeological investigation in 1976 confirmed that occupation and activities in the Roman period extended at least as far as the southern end of the inner relief road (ie the top of Pool Street). Other excavations and chance finds have confirmed extensive Roman activity on all sides of the fort, except for the north-east. These include the site of a temple of Mithras, part of a cemetery, and good evidence for a *vicus* or civilian settlement.

The fort remained in use as a military establishment until the late fourth century. It is probable that during this period the *vicus* would have become a substantial settlement, as is frequently the case at other similar sites in Britain. Unfortunately the limits and extent of this settlement have not yet been defined, and it may lie under any part or much of southern and eastern Caernarfon in the vicinity of the fort.

Following the abandonment of the site by the military, it is possible that the fort continued as the focus of some sort of civilian settlement for some time (for a discussion of the Early Medieval artifacts see Early Medieval Settlement in Wales ed N Edwards and A Lane p 115).

There is however no direct evidence at the moment for continuity of settlement beyond the Roman period.

PRE-EDWARDIAN TOWN

The motte and bailey castle constructed in 1090 was according to the author of the history of Gruffydd ap Cynan located in "en hen gaer Custenin amperauder". The motte was in fact located within the upper ward of the later Edwardian Castle. The term Caernarfon is first used by Gerald of Wales in 1188. It is often assumed that the Norman motte was utilised by the Welsh soon after the withdrawal of the Norman forces in 1115. Caernarfon thereafter is closely associated with the two Llywelyn's to such an extent that it is often referred to as a "favoured residence". Llywelyn ap Iorwerth is known to have issued a charter from Caernarfon in 1221 and Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1251, 1258, 1269 and 1272. That there was a nucleated community attached to the 'llys' is confirmed in the subsequent Edwardian accounts. Twenty men spent five days "clearing away the timbers of the demolished houses of the Welsh settlement". The Welsh settlement contained six carucates in demesne with a meadow and pasture and a garden valued at twenty shillings per annum. It also contained a port and a borough court. Building services owed by the bondmen of Llanbeblig had by the late thirteenth century been transferred to the castle of Dolbadarn; this need not imply any decline in the importance of Caernarfon as suggested by Lloyd. (Lloyd 19).

The new Edwardian borough lands included the demesne lands of Caernarfon and all but nine bovates of the bond vill of Llanbeblig "beyond the river Seiont". Excluding the burgages, the borough lands of Edwardian Caernarfon amounted to 1464 1/2 acres (Lewis 1912 46).

THE EDWARDIAN BOROUGH

In June 1283 work was commenced on the building of a new stone castle and defended town. A timber palisade was first constructed to protect the works, with some of the timber being shipped from Rhuddlan and Chester. Further substantial building materials were salvaged from Segontium, which suggests that a large part of the structure of the fort was still visible, and accessible, at this time.

By 1284 work was sufficiently advanced for a formal charter to be issued, and the town took up its role as the administrative and judicial capital of North Wales.

Within a few years the castle, town walls, burgages, quay, bridge and mill pool had all been laid out. The town had sufficient space for some seventy burgage (house and garden) plots, each measuring 60 ft by 80 ft. There were two gatehouses at the main entrances to the town, one at either end of the High Street, although there were in addition smaller entrances through the walls. The street plan was as regular as the surrounding rivers allowed.

In the revolt of Madog ap Llywellyn in 1294 there was much destruction, both to the castle and the town; however, by 1298, fifty-nine of the seventy available burgage plots had been taken up.

Nonetheless, the town remained a small place, primarily important for its administrative and judicial functions, with little commercial development. A bridge was constructed over the river Cadnant and in 1307 St Mary's church was consecrated.

By the fifteenth century, an area of extra-mural settlement comprising at least sixty houses had developed beyond the east gate. This was destroyed during the Glyndŵr revolt, but had recovered by the time of John Speed's map of 1610, accompanied by further developments along Bangor and Penrallt Streets, and south to Mill Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Roman Fort and Vicus

The Roman fort was of crucial importance for the administration of North Wales throughout the Roman period. High priorities for investigation are the location and alignment of the road to Canovium (Caerhun), the location, extent and nature of the Roman port in the area of Hen Waliau, and sampling of the cemeteries such as that discovered at Llanbeblig Road south-east of the fort. The possibility of Roman quays and other remains sited on the estuary of the Cadnant should not be dismissed. More recent reclamation renders the recovery of comparable information along the bank of the Seiont unlikely. The exact location, extent, and nature of the *vicus*, which is most likely to underlie development which has occurred to the west and north-west of the fort, is also of paramount importance.

As shown by the results of excavations so far, the quality of the remains in most areas of Roman activity should be very good. There is a strong likelihood of further masonry features being found, as well as less durable timber.

Post Roman and Pre-Edwardian Caernarfon

Segontium has a continuing traditional significance throughout the Dark Ages. The question of sub- or post-Roman settlement continuity is of course critical to the understanding of the development of Caernarfon, and is tied up with any work to understand the fort and its attendant structures and facilities during the Roman period. Remains from this period are likely to be of a less durable nature and less easily identifiable than Roman features, and, being later, and therefore stratified above the Roman remains, they would be more vulnerable to later disturbance and destruction. Excavation of the *vicus* particularly might help to shed some

light on this problem.

The extent and nature of the pre-Edwardian medieval settlement is another area that remains almost completely unknown. Lewis locates this settlement in the area of the bailey of the reoccupied Norman castle. It was recorded at the time of the construction of the Edwardian castle that some houses of the pre-Edwardian town were demolished and the timber salvaged, but nothing more is known of the community.

The Motte

The motte was apparently largely intact and contained within the east ward of the Edwardian castle until 1817, at which time it was flattened and the spoil used to extend the quay. The truncated remnant of this feature was then further levelled during renovations to the Edwardian castle after 1870. The bailey survives according to the RCAHMS, fossilised as Y Maes. It was by the late thirteenth century supposedly the location of the prince's garden and served as the medieval market place - a function which it still performs today.

Edwardian town

In the planted town itself, very little is known about the pattern of the early burgh development and the character of the buildings of the Medieval period. Excavation results thus far have been disappointing. As records indicate early extra-mural development at Caernarfon, attention should not be restricted solely to the walled area of the town.

CASTELL PRYSOR

Commote of Ardudwy Uwch Arto
NGR SH757368

Prysor lies on the Eastern side of Uwch Arto in Cwm Prysor in the parish of Trawsfynydd. The motte located on a natural boss of rock lies just above the ford of the Roman road from Tomen y Mur.

EARLY HISTORY

Edward I stayed at Prysor on 1 July 1284.

Half a carucate of land with a meadow is accounted for from the Manor of Prysor in the extent of 1284. Gresham suggests that the domain was granted in fee farm to the Borough of Harlech in 1316. The later extent of 1420 refers to the vill of Prysor called Tir Mall and according to Gresham was then held by the burgesses of Harlech. The allocation of part of the "domain" to the Burgesses of Harlech, if indeed this is the case, would be in line with similar allocations to newly founded Boroughs in other parts of Gwynedd, Ystumgwern being the nearest example. It is not at present possible to accurately plot the borough of Harlechs property in either area. "Many parcels of land beyond the borough (i.e. Harlech) were leased by the bailiffs and burgesses in the reign of Elizabeth I and were later added to the estates of the emergent gentry and were thus lost by the town" (Lloyd L W 1986 20).

Further information on the boundaries of the manor of Prysor are contained in the P.R.O Exchequer Special Commissions, Merioneth, Vol I. The Commission was appointed in 1590 to delimit the Ffridd of Prysor from the tir mal or manor. The accompanying map reproduced from Greshams article includes his own attempts to disentangle from the evidence given to the special commission those properties that had been encroached from the crown land.

Eventually the Tir Mal of Prysor and a fourth part of the Ffridd of Prysor were purchased in fee farm by Sir John Wynn of Gwydir in 1614 (The Wynn family and the estate of Gwydir G

Jones Phd thesis UCC 1974). The location of the other constituents of the parish , the monastic property and free tenants are discussed in full in(Gresham 1976 111-118).

Maps

The reconstruction of the medieval landscape at Prysor is based on Greshams map.

Surface fieldwork

Gresham and Hemp thought that the natural boss of rock was supplemented and raised by coursed masonry "Perhaps as much as 15ft at the top consists of added material, mostly rough stones with a little earth between them. The work is in an extremely ruinous condition, and large quantities of the stones have fallen down to the foot of the rock. In several places, however, wall facing remains, in one place 6 ft high, at which point (and elsewhere) a 3in setback can be seen worked in the masonry. The facing where it remains, now appears as dry stone walling, but occasional finds of mortar and sea shells behind the face suggest that mortar was used. At one time the mount of Castell Prysor must have been a circular, or nearly circular, stone base, rising 15 to 20 ft above the natural boss of rock..." (Gresham Hague 1949 313). Trenches dug across the top of the motte have caused considerable damage, the largest of these measures 6m across by 2m deep. Castell Prysor is more or less unique among the mottes of Gwynedd in that the remains of a hall are still visible west of the castle bailey. The hall measures 21m long by 10m wide, the grassed over walls stand up to 0.60m high and 1.1m wide, external and internal facing stones are visible in places. There are a number of drystone rectangular structures to the north east of the motte; "the earthworks N and W of the motte are well preserved and more complex than as recorded on the OS 1:2500 map (Davidson 1989).

Geophysics

Assessment excavation

INTERPRETATION

There is no early documentation for the motte. Gresham believed that the existence of a small tower on the motte suggested that the site was maintained at least into the early 13th century. The presence of a masonry tower has been suggested by Avent (unpublished report) and the original reference to such a structure would appear to be in Pennant. "Around its summit had been the wall whose remains are visible in several places, and in one is the appearance of a round tower...." Pennant 1778 111.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Full EDM survey and record of the structure of the motte. There may be some possibility of consolidating the structure of the motte on the same lines as the trusts work at Trer Ceiri.

CEMAES

Commote of Talybolion
NGR SH375 930

Cemaes is situated on the estuary of the Afon Wygyr on the north coast of Anglesey. The nucleus of Cemaes today is west of the Wygyr at its estuary with some extension east of the river.

EARLY HISTORY

The earliest reference to Cemaes may be Gwilym Rhyfel's poem of the late twelfth century in which Dafydd, Owain Gwynedd's son is referred to as "king of Cemaes" (Morris Jones and Parry Williams 1933 184).

Llanbadrig church along with the other *Maerdrefi* churches was one of the richest Anglesey churches (Lunt 1926 192). The church was granted by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd to the Cistercian monastery of Aberconwy (Carr 1982 271). The present church of St Patrick (east of the village of Cemaes) contains fabric of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

LLYS BUILDINGS

The extent of 1352 contains a list of the court buildings at Cemaes, these include a hall, chamber, rhaglaw's chamber, privy, pantry buttery and kitchen; the walls around the manor are also mentioned. Some of the buildings continued to be maintained in the fourteenth century. There was some expenditure on the court buildings in 1337-8, and earlier in 1325-6 the bond tenants of Talybolion were fined for failure to repair the rhaglaws chamber (Carr 1982 123 148).

LATER HISTORY

The extent of 1352 contains little detailed topographical information about Cemaes, unlike the detail provided on Aberffraw for instance. The township is referred to as the manor of Cemaes, and three types of bond tenants occupy the manor, *gwyr gwaith*, *gwyr mal* and *gwyr tir bwrdd*. The *gwyr tir bwrdd* are the tenants of the demesne land and "emerge as a result of demesne leasing after the conquest" (Stephenson 1984 59), the *gwyr gwaith* most closely resemble the *maerdref* tenants at Aberffraw and Rhosyr. There are no topographical indicators within the extent to suggest the location of any of the above mentioned tenants, the *tir bwrdd* hamlet of Meiriogen is accounted for with the manor of Cemaes, located in the parish of Llanddeusant, to the south of Cemaes.

CROWN FARMERS

In 1347 Thomas De Missenden was the Crown farmer of the manor of Cemaes, and subsequent farmers were Ieuan ap Tudur Llwyd in 1388-9, Maredudd ap Cynwrig in 1408, and the community of Cemaes in 1424. In 1437 and again in 1453 Llywelyn ap Hwlcyn ap Hywel was the Crown farmer.

In 1547 the lessee of the Manor of Cemaes was Thomas Marshe, the leases changed hands a number of times (Lewis, E A, and Conway Davies 1954 10 52 180). By 1608 (PRO LR 2 205) Sir William Thomas of Coed Alun had acquired the lease and subsequently acquired a grant of the Manor in the reign of James I (UCNW MS 21281) together with a grant of the Manor of Aber.

TOPOGRAPHICAL RECONSTRUCTION

A reconstruction of the extent of the Manor using estate records in the Coed Helen and Plas Coch collections (Caernarfon Record Office & UCNW Archives) together with the 1840s Tithe map and land tax of 1753, shows that the ecclesiastical Parish (1840s Tithe) of Llanbadrig contained the township of Cemaes and the township of Clegyrog with its detached hamlet of Tre'rgof (as in the extent of 1352). While various parts of Cemaes were detached from the Coed Alun/Coed Helen estate through marriage (ie Buckleys of Bryn ddu and the Hughes' of Plas Coch, William Buckley Hughes of Plas Coch was the son of Elizabeth, daughter and

co-heir of Rice Thomas of Coed Helen Caernarfon d.1797) and the portion of the Township nearest the village was sold to Richard Roberts of Kemmaes in 1778 (Plas Coch MS 47). The estate papers and Tithe map show that the grant of the manor of Cemaes incorporated the whole of the township defined by the Parish boundary to the East and North and the limit of Clegyrog and tref gof to the South and West (Plas Coch MS 38 + 39 3143). The Thomas family also acquired the detached hamlet of Meiriogen (Plas Coch MS 364 365) in 1619. Many papers concerning the Thomas title to the manor are currently unavailable, Plas Coch MS 3263 - 3300. There is only a small and late collection of estate maps within the estate papers, (Plas Coch MS 3759 - 3760) which contain field names for some of the farms d. 1853. The estate papers also contain nineteenth century manorial court roles, Plas Coch MS 1452.

Antiquarian References

The only reference which might possibly refer to the site of the *Llys* complex appears in H Owen Yr Hynafiaethydd (Owen 1890 11).

"We find that his residence or his castle stood a little behind the school (Ysgol Fritanaidd) on the slope of the field still known today as Castell yr Ior. The field belongs to the farm of Cemaes Fawr. Many of the old people recall that remains of the old castle were to be seen in their youth. But today nothing is to be seen, because the farmers one after the other have radically altered the spot for agricultural improvements".

As with many Anglesey Tithe maps, there are often no lists of field names on the tithe schedule; however information obtained locally suggests that one of the fields in this vicinity was called Cae Iorwerth (Edward's field). During the construction of the house Cynfor near Castellior in 1948 the remains of a wall 3ft wide were noted in the foundation trenches and a saddle quern was recovered (communication with Ms A Farrell). In 1988 a hoard of seven third century Roman coins were found on Castellior hill at SH374935

It has also been suggested that the place name Gadlys, east of the village and now the location of a hotel but originally part of Neuadd farm may be relevant to the location of the *Llys*. The earliest reference to the name occurs as Cae Gadlas in 1853 (Plas Coch MS 3759).

Maps

OS series
Tithe Map

Only a late (1853) and fairly small collection of estate maps are preserved in the estate papers. These are Plas Coch MS 3757 3760.

Surface field work

Several hundred acres were visited at Cemaes including all the farm of Cemaes Fawr and the area around Clafdy and Llanciliana. The name Clafdy may refer to the Leper house mentioned in 1393-4 (Carr 1982 194). A number of possible hut circles were noted east of Neuadd Farm and a search of the AP collection at the regional office at the CCW located a crop mark site of a fairly large enclosure south of the village. The village of Cemaes has expanded quite considerably in particular in the last thirty years or so, the area of Cae Iorwerth and Castellior has been gradually built over since the 1950s.

Geophysics

Assessment Excavation

INTERPRETATION

The likely location of the *Llys* at Cemaes, is to some extent dependent on the relationship of the present village to its medieval predecessor. Carr suggests that there may be some continuity of settlement. Porth Wygyr, the harbour at Cemaes, is mentioned as one of the three chief ports of the island of Britain in Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch. Other early references to Porth Wygyr include a reference to the Lord Rhys dealing hospitality about Porth Wygyr and Llywelyn Fardd's address to Owain Gwynedd as "eryr porth wygyr" (Bromwich 1978 228 237). Porth Wygyr is also mentioned in a list of harbours of Wales in the reign of Edward VI which "probably indicates the places which were regarded as ports in the middle ages" (Carr 1982 25). The possible survival of the village of Cemaes as at Aberffraw may owe something to its coastal location. If this is indeed the case then it is not altogether unlikely that the expansion of the village may have overwhelmed the probable location of the *Llys*. The place name Gadlys appears to be a late corruption of Gadlas (rickyard) and without further supporting evidence should not be given to high a priority as a possible location of the *Llys*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While it seems probable that the village of Cemaes evolved out of one of the bond settlements within the township, there is as yet no archaeological data on which to test this hypothesis. Any developments in the centre of the village should therefore be investigated. A study of the 1940s RAF vintage photography of Cemaes taken prior to the rapid expansion of the village may provide some information on the area now built over by the Castellior housing estate.

CROGEN

Commote of Is Tryweryn
NGR SJ 00603699

Crogen is located on the bank of the river Dee in the parish of Llandderfel.

EARLY HISTORY

The motte at Crogen may have been given to Elise ap Madog by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in 1202 (Thomas Jones 1955 185). The site was subsequently probably a Royal Manor of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and possibly the site where William de Braos was hanged for his indiscretion with Llywelyn's wife Joan (Carr 1963 190). After the treaty of Aberconway Llywelyn ap Gruffudd was ordered to hand over Crogen to Dafydd ap Gruffydd (of the line of Owain Brogyntyn) having destroyed Dafydd's house at Hendwr. "Dafydd's son Llywelyn paid an annual rent of 60 shillings for Crogen which was accounted for as a royal manor in the 1285 extent, until 1315 when it was remitted by Edward II" and the manor subsequently remained in the hands of the family" (Carr 1963 190).

LATER HISTORY

A descendant of the line of Owain Brogyntyn was still living at Plas yn Crogen in the early seventeenth century (Nicholas 1872 683). The property was eventually acquired by Maurice Wynn, sixth son of Sir John Wynn of Gwydir in about 1640 (unpublished survey RCAHMS 1949 Irvine).

Motte

The motte (unscheduled) measures 9m across the top and is 7m high. The house adjacent to the motte which was rebuilt around 1830 contains elements of the earlier fourteenth century

manor house. The east wing of the present house was probably the solar, and a fourteenth century window remains in the south gable (unpublished survey RCAHMW 1949 Irvine).

Maps

Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

Geophysical

Assessment excavation

INTERPRETATION

The significance of this site is surely the juxtaposition of the motte and later fourteenth century residence, demonstrating as it does the continuity of occupation that is so absent from most if not all of the other royal manors. This continued occupation of the site has only occurred because the site was not held by the ruling dynasty of Gwynedd during the conquest. A similar sequence is known at the motte at Marford in Clwyd.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The motte should be scheduled and the RCAHM survey, updated and published.

DEGANNWY

Commote of Creuddyn
NGR SH 782 795

Degannwy castle is located on two precipitous hillocks and an intervening saddle which dominate the east bank of the Conway estuary.

EARLY HISTORY

Activity at the site in the Roman and Early Medieval period can be inferred from the presence of first-fourth century pottery and a third-fourth century coin series. One sherd of class B1 imported eastern Mediterranean wine amphora (fifth-sixth century) indicate occupation of the westernmost of the two hills in the early medieval period.

Traditional associations of Maelgwn Gwynedd with Degannwy (died s.a. 547 "in the royal court of Rhos" - Degannwy may be intended although G R J Jones relates the reference to Dinorben) may suggest a Dark Age royal site.

There are two possible early references to the site Arx Decantorum (identified as Deganwy) burnt by lightning c.812 A.D. and besieged by Saxons c.823 A.D (Thomas Jones 1955 4).

A Norman castle was built by Robert of Rhuddlan c.1080 at Degannwy. The castle had a varied history in c.1200 Llywelyn ab Iorwerth held the castle, in 1210 the Earl of Chester, Llywelyn ab Iorwerth 1213, Henry III 1244, and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1263, when the castle was finally destroyed. Edward I subsequently stayed at Degannwy in 1277 and Alcock suggests that Edward may have been responsible for the ditch and bank on the north side of the bailey and the fragment of standing masonry which "probably marks a gate tower"(Alcock 1967 191 - 201).

THE BOROUGH

Tenements at the town of Degannwy are mentioned in 1241. Burgages were assigned by Henry III in 1248 and a Borough charter granted in 1252 with instructions to enclose the town with a dike and wall. A horse mill was ordered in 1250 and instructions issued for the provision of a chapel in the same year.

Lewis believed that following the demolition of the castle by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1263 the borough ceased to flourish (Lewis 1912 193). In 1305 there were however nineteen placeae at Degannwy which by now was incorporated within the liberties of the new borough of Conwy. During the years 1300-14 the weekly mart at Degannwy was as prosperous as that of Conwy, and there were twenty-nine habitated places there early in the reign of Edward II. A fifteenth century reference to the market of the ferry at Degannwy suggests the continuance of the market there (Lewis, 1912 193). Alcock suggested that the borough may have been located around the northern skirt of the castle (however see below).

The existence of a *maerdref* or bond community adjacent to the Castle is evidenced by the retention of the place name Vardre attached to the two hills and their environs. In the extent of 1352 the vill of Gannau is noted as being of the nature of *Maerdref* and was held by Madog Gloddaith "of the lord prince". The borough of Degannwy was incorporated into the borough property of Conwy and accounted for separately (Griffiths 1947 5). There remained therefore a number of bond tenants on the *tir cyfrif* bond land, which was farmed out in the post conquest period.

The twenty shillings annual rent paid by Madog Gloddaith may suggest that the *maerdref* tenants occupied a carucate of the demesne (20s a carucate was the usual value of demesne land). Added support for this suggestion may be found in the attempts by the burgesses of Conwy to obtain a grant of twenty acres of land situated in the midst of their own, held by six of the Prince's villeins on the demesne of Gannock in 1305. The burgesses were unsuccessful in their attempts and the *Maerdref* lands remained intact (Lewis 1912 45). A further two hundred acres of the demesne of Gannock was held by the Bishop of Bangor following a grant by Edward I (Ellis 1838 222).

LATER HISTORY

Mostyn papers (Hawarden Record Office)

Several papers relating to the lessees of the bond vills of Bodyscallen and Vairdreff are contained within the Mostyn papers. The earliest of these appears to be a lease of the township of Bodyscallen to one William Hoken dated 1460, (Mostyn MS 953). There is a subsequent lease to Henry Salusbury in 1488 (Mostyn MS 954) and an account of Henry Rowlands, auditor for the township of Bodyscallen and Vairdreff (Mostyn MS 955).

The vill of Bodyscallen and *Maerdref* were leased to Lewis ap David in 1546 (Mostyn MS 956). In 1567 William Mostyn acquired the lease for the township of Bodyscallen and Vairdreff which was subsequently acquired by Hugh Gwyn Griffiths (Mostyn MS957). In 1664 Hugh Wynne (then living at Bodyscallen) acquired a 1000 year mortgage on the township of Bodyscallen (Mostyn MS 958). As usual there appears to have been some competition between the wealthier landowners of the area over the crown lands. While the Bodyscallen estate prevailed in this instance, the two estates eventually merged, hence the documents are contained in the Mostyn collection.

In the earliest estate rentals (Mostyn MS 5441) d1717-36, y Vardre accounts for the second largest rent of £24.00. In the 1760s Vardre was often held by the occupier of Bodyscallen, (Mostyn MS 5452) by the 1830s it was occupied by a tenant along with Fattw (Mostyn MS 5460 4470 etc) by this date the property had become a part of the Mostyn Estate. Vardre and

Fattw amounted to 58 acres). Mostyn MS 5470 also contains an interesting reference to the payment of kings and town rents to the corporation of Conway for Bodysgallen, Towyn and Fattw. This reference could possibly refer to a payment to the borough for property once incorporated in the borough of Conway.

Maps

OS

Lewis Morris Plans in St Georges Channel 1748

Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

Degannwy is now a large town, but in the mid nineteenth century it appears to have been little more than a small hamlet or farm which rapidly expanded from the later nineteenth century onwards. The immediate area of the castle is a scheduled ancient monument, the castle is now almost entirely encircled by housing and commercial development.

Immediately north of the castle are the remains of a number of circular and rectangular structures; the circular structures (prn 2837) are said to be typical of the Iron age and Romano British homesteads of the area. There is one definite rectangular building platform of six by four meters, set within an enclosure, two small platforms to the south east may be associated. The N A R survey believed the complex to be "probably a medieval farm stead, certainly later than the castle since the site is on the line of the outer ditch" (NAR 77NE 1975). An earlier survey by the RCAHMW thought that the remains might be associated with the Henrican borough (RCAHMW 1956 154). A similar enclosure and platform has recently been noted to the south of the castle near the remains of Fatw farm. It is not unlikely therefore that these sites relate to post-conquest farming of the demesne lands around the castle.

Geophysics

Assessment Excavation

Excavations at Degannwy Castle were conducted by L Alcock from 1961-6.

INTERPRETATION

Further work would be needed on the rentals and surveys to separate Wynn's properties from those of the Mostyns of Glodaeth in order to obtain further information on the possible medieval divisions of the Parish of Eglwys yn Rhos. By at least 1778 the Glodaeth Estate had merged with Bodysgallen by the marriage of Sir Roger Mostyn to Margaret, daughter of the reverend Hugh Wynne (Pennant 1778 337). Records concerning the Bishop of Bangor's properties in Creuddyn at the National Library of Wales might also prove useful.

However this is unlikely to provide substantially more information than can be extracted from the data currently available. The Bodysgallen demesne containing fields known as yr Hendre is no doubt more or less the medieval township of Bodysgallen, while Y Vardre as shown on the tithe map is no doubt the nucleus of that hamlet around the castle of Degannwy. The Henrican Borough is likely to have been in the vicinity of the hamlet of Degannwy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are still a large number of points which require clarification at Degannwy. For instance not only do we know very little about the nature of the settlement in the early medieval period, or of the form of Robert of Rhuddlan's early castle, there is even some dispute over the location of the medieval borough. Degannwy remains one of the few sites with the highest potential for

elucidating the development of a high status site and all its chronological manifestations.

DOLBENMAEN

Commote of Eifionydd
NGR SH507431

Dolbenmaen stands at a ford on an important routeway 3km south-east of the Roman fort of Pen Llystyn. An earthwork motte was established in the loop of the Afon Dwyfor at the neck of the Llyn peninsula.

EARLY HISTORY

The earliest reference to Dolbenmaen is probably in Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch, in the Mabinogi of Math fab Mathonwy (Gwenogvryn Evans 1908 44). The extent of 1352 refers to the vill of Dolbenmaen as being of Tre Cyfrif tenure. As this is the only township in Eifionydd under this form of tenure it is usually claimed as being the *Maerdref* of the commote, a suggestion first made by J E Lloyd (Lloyd 1905 295-302). It is also usually suggested that the Dolbenmaen ceased to be a royal residence following the construction of Criccieth castle by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (Gresham 1973 372).

Edward 1 stayed at Dolbenmaen on 13 August 1284.

In 1318 the township was granted to John and Alianor Edward II son and daughter, by 1352 the township had been granted to Queen Isabella. Robert ap Maredydd was the crown farmer in the reign of Henry IV, brother of Ieuan ap Maredydd of Cefn y Fan, a fourteenth century hall house located on the southern border of the township of Dolbenmaen (Hogg 1954).

LATER HISTORY

The later history of the township including a full account of the later Crown leases is given in Gresham's Eifionydd. The following is a brief summary: crown leases for Dolbenmaen were granted in 1546 and 1572. Disputes arising out of the later lease lead to an official survey of the township boundaries in 1589-90. Disputes concerning the crown lease of the township continued into the early seventeenth century, the lease was subsequently acquired by Sir Richard Trevor of Denbighshire. By 1637 Sir Richard Trevor had acquired "the whole of Dolbenmaen, both township and manor" which he demised to his son in law John Griffith of Cefn Amwlch. The land came up for sale once more in 1719 and was acquired by William Brynker, eldest son of James Brynker, owner of the Brynker estate. Following William Brynker's disastrous handling of his financial affairs, the majority of the township (excluding Dolwgan, a cottage known as Ty Thomas Hughes and a part of Hendre Du) was bought by the Clenennau estate and only finally sold off in 1911.

EXTENT OF THE TOWNSHIP

The township of Dolbenmaen is more or less conterminous with the parish boundary (Tithe map 1838). The demesne or manor of Dolbenmaen was located in the immediate vicinity of the motte on the land now occupied by the farms Tyddyn y Llan and Dolwgan. While the township is not referred to as a manor in the Edwardian documentation, Gresham draws attention to a seventeenth century document (Calendar of Wynn Papers MS 1547). "...Dolbenmaen was a manor of the Princes, the manor and demesne containing two carucates by itself, while the township was charged with a rent by itself".

Maps

OS

Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

Part of the W side of the motte has been mutilated by the farm buildings. The mound measures 6.6m high and is 36m in diameter about the base. A stone wall 0.75m to 1m high encircles the top of the motte (A Davidson FMWR). The RCAHMW report suggests loose stones on the summit suggest that masonry buildings once occupied the top.

The parish church of St Mary's (formerly a chapel to the Parish Church of Penmorfa) stands directly opposite the motte. The church fabric is of the fifteenth century.

Geophysical

A Magnetometer survey of the field to the North West of the Motte was undertaken in 1992

Assessment excavation

INTERPRETATION

While there are no known references to the construction of the motte, it seems likely that it acted as the commotal centre and may even have continued to fulfil some such function following the construction of Criccieth castle in the early years of the thirteenth century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At Dolbenmaen there is the potential to establish the chronological sequence of and the function of the motte following the construction of Criccieth castle. The location of the settlement of the bond tenants who worked on the demesne also remains to be resolved.

LLANFAES

Commote of Dindaethwy
NGR SH605 778

On the south east coast of Anglesey near the northern end of the Menai Straits. The present village of Llanfaes consists of a small number of cottages clustered around the parish church. To the south and east of the church there are a number of more recent housing developments.

EARLY HISTORY

During the thirteenth century Llanfaes developed an important commercial aspect. There was a ferry across the straits, fisheries (remains of a weir survive 500m to the north) and a harbour. Maritime trade was more than purely local, with imports of Gascon wine, and Llanfaes accounted for 70% of the total trading revenues of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd. By the late thirteenth century the town had almost certainly acquired a compact nucleated plan incorporating 120 burgages extending over ninety acres. It was the site chosen for the establishment of the first Franciscan house in North Wales (founded between 1237-45). The parish church of St Catherine's was the richest church on Anglesey in 1254.

Some traces of the origins of the town as a bond *maerdref* may be suggested by the agricultural

services still owed by the tenants of Llanfaes. "The *maerdref* was of course, a bond township inhabited and cultivated by bondmen and it is possible that the burgesses of Llanfaes were originally its unfree tenants and their burgesses bond tenements" (Carr 1982 232).

Llywelyn ap Gruffudd granted a charter to Ynys Lannog from Llanfaes in 1247 and stayed at Llanfaes in early January of 1277 (Stephenson 1984 234). Edward I stayed there 1283 and again for three weeks in April 1295. The court is referred to in 1305, when three and a half acres of meadow were said to be located under the court of Llanfaes (Lewis 1912 51). The town was probably burnt in 1294 during Madog ap Llywelyn's revolt. Following the revolt Edward decided to build a new castle and town at Beaumaris and to transfer the inhabitants of Llanfaes to Newborough. In November of 1295 the market of Llanfaes was transferred to Beaumaris and by 1302 so was the ferry. Many of the houses had been dismantled and removed to Beaumaris. By 1318 the town was uninhabited (Soulsby 1983 79), and by 1352 only the mill of Llanfaes remained of the former crown possessions.

LOCATION OF THE TOWN

There are a number of evidences which may help in locating the town. To the west of the Parish church the place name Henllys may refer to the original centre of the manor. Tolls levied for the carriage of goods from the port to the town suggest that the town was located some distance from the shore. The site of the Franciscan Friary may have stood on the edge of the town.

Recent work at Llanfaes is beginning to throw some light on the exact location of the town. Geophysical Surveys have been conducted on a number of plots at Llanfaes, revealing possible house platforms or crofts. Trial excavation in November 1993 and May 1994 confirmed the identification of the features in the Geophysical Survey B2, together with the identification of a number of medieval pits. Several hundred sherds of medieval pottery have been recovered during the recent excavations together with over a hundred sherds from the watching brief on the Shell Oil pipeline in 1973-4.

Additional information has come to light in the form of metal-detecting activity in the area over the last few years. Some 250 coins together with a number of other artifacts (spindle whorls, brooches, buckles etc) have been recovered and a report is in preparation (EM Beasley NMW).

The probable layout of the friary is discussed in GAT report No. 29 and east of the friary the field name Cladd Dy may refer to the leper house mentioned in 1408-9. Leper hospitals may have been located in each *maerdref* (Carr 1982 193) and are known from Aberffraw, Cemaes, Rhosyr and Llanfaes. Surviving place names in these townships indicate their probable location.

BOROUGH LANDS OF BEAUMARIS

The borough lands of Beaumaris (amounting to 1,486 acres) contained elements of the township of Bodgylched (still seen in a farm name) and the ecclesiastical township of Bancenyn (Penmon) and the township of Llanfaes including the 780 acres of demesne there (part of the hamlet of Cerriggyddyl which adjoined the demesne was also appropriated). The southern boundary of Llanfaes parish is possibly also the boundary of the manor of Llanfaes.

The largest landowner in the parish by the mid nineteenth century were the Bulkleys of Baron Hill, followed by the Hamptons of Henllis.

Maps

Tithe map

Henllys Estate map 1830
OS

Surface Fieldwork

Undertaken on the majority of the properties around the present village of Llanfaes. It did not however prove possible to gain admission to one of the larger properties.

Geophysical

see attached reports

Assessment Excavation

report in preparation

INTERPRETATION

While some progress has been made in attempting to locate the focus of the settlement at Llanfaes, considerably more remains to be done. The site is undoubtedly one of the most important settlements in pre-conquest Gwynedd and does not appear at present to have been much disturbed by later developments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Further geophysical survey and trial excavation together with a complete catalogue of the important metalwork assemblage should be a priority.

LLANLLIBIO AND CLEIFIOG

Commote of Llifon
NGR SH 330 816

Cleifiog is located on the north west coast of Anglesey adjacent to Holy Island in the former parish of Llanynghenedl. Llanllibio was the adjoining parish to the east.

EARLY HISTORY

For a full account of the history of the township of Llanllibio and Cleifiog see F A Barns *Land Tenure and Landscape in Llangynghenedl* (Barns 1988).

Llywelyn ap Gruffudd made a grant of the township of Llanllibio to the sons of Llywelyn ap Meredith, (a member of the royal kindred and descendant of Cynan ap Owain Gwynedd). Llywelyn's son Dafydd held Llanllibio in 1308, his nephew Meredith acquired the grant of Llanllibio in 1312 and subsequently of Cleifiog in 1327 (Barns 1988 42).

The extent of 1352 records that Llanllibio was of *tref gyfrif* tenure and the township had been granted to Thomas de Brerely. Cleifiog is recorded as a mixed township with one free *gwely*, four bond *gweluwau* and one carucate of demesne land of 120 acres (Carr 1971-2 182).

LATER HISTORY

For a full account of the later history of Cleifiog and Llanllibio see Barns above cited; a crown

rent for the former bond lands in Cleifiog and Llanllibio was still charged until the properties were sold to the Baron Hill estate in 1813 (Barns 1988 37).

Maps

surface fieldwork

see below

Geophysical

assessment excavation

INTERPRETATION

Llanllibio in the commote of Llifon is usually regarded as the only Anglesey commote without a *llys*/commotal centre. The men of the commote owed building works on the *Llys* at Aberffraw. Tenants of the *tir cyfrif* townshio of Llanllibio were however required to repair the roof of the manor. There has already been some speculation that a *llys* may once have existed on the bond lands in Llanllibio or on the carucate of Royal demesne in Cleifiog. The existence of demesne land is unlikely to be sufficient in itself to indicate a former residence of the Princes, however the reference to a building of the manor of Llanllibio in the extent of 1352 may relate to a residential complex.

Llanllibio was the only *tir cyfrif* community in Anglesey to possess a church (Carr 1982 38). The location of the church is known and traces of the churchyard wall are visible as a low bank 0.3m high (GAT SMR PRN 2054). To the north of the church at SH32708210 a cropmark of an oval enclosure of unknown date has recently been identified.

Barns suggests that the *Llys*, if there was such a complex, may have been located in the vicinity of the church and castell place name near the Alaw estuary.

The church is the Capel Bronwen referred to by Baynes in "The old monasteries and chapels of Anglesey" (Baynes 1920 40), which he locates near Y Arw in Llanyngghenedl. The site also appears under a list of "Monasteries, Abbeys and chapels demolished in the Isle of Anglesey" compiled by Hugh Huws of Llwydiarth Esgob in 1796. The ECM No 33 was supposedly found at Capel Bronwen (Nash Williams 1950 63).

The castell is an earthwork located at SH 306 814. The earthwork survives on its north west side to a maximum height of two meters; the remainder is less impressive but nevertheless substantial, the enclosure is sub square rather than circular. The farm known as Tyddyn y Castell which was located on this site is referred to in LR2/205 (1608) and earlier, in 1563, a farm building is still shown on the OS map of 1863 (Barns 1988 64).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the cropmark site at Llanllibio and the earthwork at Castell may have some potential. Limited trial trenching to establish their date would be the obvious course of action.

NEFYN

Commote of Dinllaen
NGR SH 308 407

Located on the north coast of the Llŷn peninsula, close to the coastal promontory fort of Porth

Dinllaen (which gives its name to the commote) and in the shadow of the extensive hillfort of Garn Boduan.

EARLY HISTORY

The earliest mention of Nefyn is in Buchedd Gruffydd ap Cynan. The port at Nefyn was used by Gruffydd on his return from Ireland in the 1090s (Evans 1977). Gerald of Wales visited Nefyn in 1188 and mentions the priory of Nefyn, held by Haughmond Abbey. The parish Church was a Chapel of ease to Boduan until 1842, "a status consistent with the former existence in the manor of a royal chapel" (Jones Pierce 1957 37). Two burgesses of Nefyn witnessed a charter of Maredudd ap Cynan (ob 1212) (Haughmond Abbey Cartulary, Shrewsbury Public Library MS. 1, f. 149).

In 1284 the town contained fifty households and was recognised by crown officials as a burgus (Soulsby 1983 193) the same survey accounted for five households of the *maerdref* of Nefyn. The men of the *maerdref* were obliged to "keep clean the precincts of the manor house, to bring fuel to the hall from the Prince's woods and turbaries, and there to attend to the fires" (Jones Pierce 1957 39). The presence of a few residual men of the *maerdref* at Nefyn is a reminder of the unfree origins of the settlement.

By 1293 93 taxpayers were accounted for from the town. The borough charter was obtained on 1st Feb 1355.

The manor of Nefyn included as well as a garden, meadow and vaccaries, 200 acres of arable in demesne (Jones Pierce 1933 256 263).

LLYS BUILDINGS

References to repairs of the Court buildings at Nefyn are known from 1284 and 1306-7. The sheriff's account of 1306-7 (Jones Pierce 1930 150) refers to a great barn, a small hall, with its chamber and private chamber next to the King's Chamber, and to the gallery of the solar. Mention is also made of the wooden shingles of the roof of the solar and straw for thatching the solar and of the cost of re-erecting the fallen wall of the hall. In 1284 new ovens were built to accommodate the increased demands occasioned by the great tournament.

LATER HISTORY

Following the survey of 1293 the town was let out at farm and there is little information about the subsequent development of the town. The town was devastated by Glyndwr in 1400 and as at Pwllheli subsequently went into decline. Nefyn never regained its position as the main centre of population in Llŷn. It is described as no more than a village by Camden. Pennant describes Nefyn as a small town, Lewis noted that there were 1726 inhabitants in 1833 (Soulsby 1983 193, Lewis S 1833 Jones Pierce 1957).

TOPOGRAPHY OF THE TOWN

Jones Pierce believed that the medieval burgages were concentrated in the area east of the motte, and Lewis Morris in 1748 shows the town located between the motte and the church. By the early nineteenth century the focus of the town still lay between the church and the motte with a development south along High Street (while it cannot at present be shown how recent this development is, a topographical reconstruction of the layout of the post-medieval borough could probably be reconstructed from the available documentation, for example the Glynllifon Estate papers). Even as recently as 1900 there had been relatively little development westwards in the direction of the motte, but this area is now much built over.

MANOR BOUNDARY

The Parish of Nefyn (created in 1842) was coterminous with the borough (dissolved in 1882). The common of the Borough/Manor was enclosed in 1812 (Nevin Enclosure act 29 Feb 1812). The extent of the Borough can be traced from the map in the report of The Parliamentary Boundaries Commission 1831.

Maps

tithe map
OS maps

Surface Fieldwork

The motte is about 3.5m high and 13m in diameter, it has been much damaged by houses and gardens and the construction of a block of public toilets has cut into the west side of the motte. A small rectangular stone built tower on the summit is usually referred to as a watch tower associated with the herring industry.

Geophysical

Assessment excavation

INTERPRETATION

South of the motte the place name Gadlys may refer to the possible location of the *llys* complex. The earliest reference from 1566 appears in Glynllifon MS 6985.

"gift to uses of a messuage called y ty yn y Gadlis and ter mell in Nevyn".

Subsequently in 1623

"Tuy yn y gadlis otherwise called Ty Hughe gyltyn Evan with a garden adjoining a parcel of land called Tir Mell in Nevyn".

On the 1840s Tithe Map for Nefyn the field is referred to as Caer Gadlis and as Cae Gadlas on the OS 1:10,000.

The site of the tournament at Botacho Ddu in 1284 was believed locally to have been at Cae Iorwerth and Cae Ymryson (RCAHM 1964 84 Jones Pierce 1957 38), almost adjoining Gadlis.

In 1964 the RCAHM suggested that the location of the *llys* may have been in the area of the now vanished circular earthwork on the Edern road (SH 2957 4028) near the house called Ty'n *Llys*, rather than near the motte.

Pennant first mentioned the earthwork in 1778 in connection with the tournament held at Nefyn.

"The first (ie the tournament) I apprehended to have been performed in thofe circular area, which we ftill meet with in fome parts of England, furrounded with a high mound, a ditch in the infide, and two entrances, one oppofite to the other, for the knights to enter at and make their onfet. One of thefe I have feen by Penrith, which bears the name of Arthur's round table; others, which are far larger, I have found on Thornborough heath in Yorkfhire; of which I may in future time give fome account" (Pennant 1778 213).

Lewis in his Topographical Dictionary of Wales, clearly adopting Pennant's interpretation,

says that:

"traces of the circular earthwork within which the military feats took place may still be seen on the road to Edern". (Lewis S 1833).

This association with the tournament no doubt initially made by Pennant has by 1964 become both the supposed location of the tournament (RCAHM 1964 cxlii 84) and the possible location of the *Llys*. It seems fairly clear from Pennants description that he was probably referring to a henge monument.

The location of the court buildings at Nefyn is likely to lie in the area between the motte and Y Gadlis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The growth of the village of Nefyn, while considerable, has not totally overwhelmed the area around Gadlis. Geophysical survey of this area might prove worthwhile. In particular the reference to the construction of additional ovens for the tournament of 1284 might prove susceptible to magnetometer survey.

NEIGWL

Commote of Cymydmaen
NGR SH253 305

Neigwl is located on the southern tip of the Llyn peninsula near Porth Neigwl to which it gives its name.

EARLY HISTORY

For a full account of the history of Neigwl see Gresham "The Township of Neigwl" (Gresham 1976), the following is a brief summary. The earliest reference to Neigwl occurs in Llywelyn ab Iorwerths charter to Cymer Abbey in 1209, a third of the township was then made over to the Abbey (Williams Jones 1957 45-78). The charter confirmed the earlier grant by Maredudd the son of Cynan ap Owain Gwynedd, the original benefactor of Cymer. The grant is referred to in Calender of Patent Rolls 1313-17, pp 394-5. The grant must have been made some time between 1190 and 1201. Another third of the township had been granted to the Colligate Church of Clynnog Fawr by Rhodri son of Owain Gwynedd. The grant is mentioned in a 15th century charter (Ellis 1838 257).

The remaining portion of the township, the maerdref, was located in the north west corner of the township. In 1282 there were fourteen bondmen located on the maerdref, part of their obligations included the maintenance of the hall, as well as fiftytwo days work each on the demesne. Edward the I stayed at Neigwl on July the 27th to the 30th of 1284. By 1352 only three bondsmen are recorded and no mention is made of the hall. The extent also mentions one carucate of demesne. In 1318 the manor and mills of Neigwl were granted to Edmund Dynieton (Rees 1975 4) and by 1352 to Iddel ap Cynddelw (Gresham 1976 16).

LATER HISTORY

In June 1556 the lease of Neigwl was acquired by Owen ap Morris, in 1569 by Margaret Cornewallis and in 1586 and 1591 by Hugh Rowland (Lewis Conway Davies 1954 284 296). The lessees were all local people. Gresham was unable to locate any subsequent information on *Maerdref* until the land tax assessment of 1785 by when the property was part of the

Glynllifon estate.

However the missing documentation is housed in the Glynllifon papers (Cvon Record Office). The collection containing leases of maerdref from 1639 to its eventual incorporation within the Glynllifon Estate (see Glynllifon MS 6278, 6279, 6286, 6281). The maerdref lands equate to the farm of Faerdre owned by the Glynllifon estate, the boundaries of which are given on the Tithe Map.

Maps

OS
Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

A sub-rectangular enclosure seen in recent aerial photographs enclosing one end of a small pond which has now vanished is the only known site on the county's S.M.R within the farm boundaries although Gresham's map draws attention to a field on the east of the farm known as Cae'r Brenin. The farm (now split in two) is mainly used for livestock although there are caravan parks both adjacent to the main farm building and on the southern boundary of the farm.

Geophysics

Assessment excavation

INTERPRETATION

The *llys* complex could be located on any part of the *maerdref* lands, it need not necessarily be near the modern farmhouse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Geophysical survey and AP coverage

PENNAL

Commote of Ystumanner
NGR SH 699 004

The village of Pennal is located on the Pennal river in the Dyfi valley. The Roman fort of Cefn Gaer lies 500m south-east of the village, a motte lies 250m to the south-west. The village of Cwrt ("court") lies 1km to the east.

EARLY HISTORY

An enquiry held in 1308 states that "Llywelyn vawr who first at his own expense built the manor of Estimanner because he had no mansion house elsewhere in the said commote.... Afterwards prince Llywellyn (ap Gruffudd) once asked the men of the said commote of Estimanner to repair the fences and buildings of the said manor, which they did at his request. As often as the men of the said commote thought that the said Prince would come to those parts they repaired the said fences and buildings at their own expense..... (PRO chancery Inquisitions Miscellaneous, II P14 No 49).

A number of letters were addressed from Ystumanner by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1279-81 (Edwards 1935 76 95).

The Edwardian extent of 1285 accounts for one carucate of land, a meadow and a garden and the labour of the villeins in the manor of Ystumanner. Jones Pierce located the manor at Pennal; "there existed at Pennal, right down to the eve of the Edwardian conquest, a considerable maerdref community and extensive royal property" (Jones Pierce 1950 15). The mill and fishery of Pennal are accounted for separately in the extent of 1284. In 1420 the manor mill and fishery of Pennal are accounted for separately from the rents due from the township.

Thirty-eight tenants of the township of Pennal are assessed in the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1292-3. (Pennal was one of the most heavily populated townships in the commote). Pennal is usually accounted for separately from the rest of the commote in the ministers accounts for example in 1377 and 1393 (Ministers Accounts from Edward I to Henry VIII p487).

LATER HISTORY

Records concerning crown lessees of the vill and mill of Pennal and, in particular, disputes concerning the mill and fishing rights in the sixteenth century show that the crown surveyors continued to collect crown revenue on the basis of the original extents. However by this time there is no longer any mention of the demesne of the manor (Lewis and Conway Davies 1954 432-3 Jones E G 1939 232 Jeffreys-Jones 1955 223). The documentary evidence also provides a useful list of place names in the township of Pennal.

Additional information on the extent of the township of Pennal in the seventeenth century is provided in 'A rental of crown lands in the commote of Estimanner 1633 (Jones E D 1953-6). A full list is given of both tenants and lessees. It is clear from the document and the schedule that the parish of Pennal contained both the township of Pennal and the township of Cwmcadian (in the margin of this document it says Estimaener parish of Pennall, all the other townships are referred to by their township and parish name. This form of entry probably refers to an earlier specific reference to Pennal as the manor of Ystumanner). Cwmcadian was included in Llywelyn ab Iorwerth's grant to Cymer Abbey (Williams-Jones 1957 69). 200 acres and the messuage of Come Kaddian formerly held by the Abbey were leased in 1568 (Lewis and Conway Davies 1954 437).

Maps

Tithe map
OS

Surface fieldwork

The motte measures 30m in diameter about its base and is 15m across at its top and 4.5m high. A faint wet depression about the south east quadrant may be the remains of an encircling ditch. The motte is covered by up to fifteen mature oak trees. There is some animal erosion on the north side.

Geophysics

Assessment Excavation

INTERPRETATION

The cantref of Meirionnydd came under the sphere of influence of Powys. In the early years of the twelfth century it was given by Cadwgan ap Bleddyn of Powys to Uchdryd ap Edwin.

Following the death of Owain ap Cadwgan in 1116 Uchdryd constructed the motte at Cymer as a sign of his authority in the area. As a result of this act of defiance he was driven out of Meirionnydd. In 1123 the sons of Gruffydd ap Cynan of Gwynedd acquired the cantref and a motte was established at Cynfal by Cadwaladr, Owain Gwynedd's brother in 1137. Llywelyn ab Iorwerth took over the cantref from his son Gruffudd in 1221.

In the discussion on castles in Meirionnydd published in *Atlas Sir Meirionnydd* Beverly Smith maintains that only Tomen y Mur among all the earthworks castles of the modern county of Meirionnydd was a Norman construction. Further the author argues that the mottes at Tomen Las Pennal, Domen Ddreiniog in Tal y Bont and possibly also at Castell Prysor in Ardudwy Uwch Arto and the Motte at Bala were the locations of the commotal centres (Beverly Smith 19xx 34).

Further work would be necessary on the ministers' accounts to establish the fate of the demesne lands at Pennal. It is not unlikely that they were rented by the tenants of the township, although they still appear to be accounted for separately in 1420.

By the seventeenth century at least, Domen Las is located within the Parish of Towyn and the township of Cynfal. This might suggest some rearrangement in the original lay out of the township boundaries. The vill of Pennal is almost certainly located on the site of the present village. The parish church of Pennal is included in the Valuation of Norwich of 1253, the present structure was rebuilt in the nineteenth century (Lunt 1926).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Geophysical survey and schedule enhancement of the area around the Motte.

PENRHOSLLIGWY

Commote of Twrcelyn

Located on the north east coast of Anglesey by Lligwy Bay

NGR SH 483 873

EARLY HISTORY

The parish of Penrhoslligwy contains a number of reasonably well known sites. Din Lligwy, perhaps the best known of the Romano British hut groups in Anglesey, is located in the south of the parish and near by is the probable twelfth century ruined chapel Capel Lligwy.

The earliest reference to Penrhoslligwy may be that of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's visit there on 9 July 1274. Llywelyn also stayed there on 6 July 1280 (Edwards 1940 33 1935 89). Edward I stayed at Penrhoslligwy on 6 August 1283.

The Edwardian extent of Anglesey of 1284 accounted for a rent of Assize of £2 18s 4d and £6 for the rent of four carucates of demesne (about 240 acres) at Penrhos. The extent made by brother Llywelyn in the same year specifies that there were 18 1-2 *gavaelion* in the township (Carr 1988 19 25). By 1301 the community of Penrhoslligwy were paying the reduced rent of £5 for the demesne and the three royal mills were farmed at £10. The extent of 1352 records that there were by now 28 1/2 *gaveilion* within the township and they were of *gwyr gwaith*, *gwyr mal* and *gwyr tir bwrdd* tenure. On May 12 1340 the township was granted for life to Sir John de Ravensholme. In 1376-7 and again in 1480-1 the township was farmed by the community of Penrhoslligwy. For a full account of the farms of Penrhoslligwy in the fourteenth and fifteenth century see Carr 1982 368.

TENURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Gwyr tir bwrdd (lit. - "demesne - men") men "emerged it seems as a result of demesne-leasing after the conquest " (Stephenson 1984 59) thus the *gwyr tir bwrdd* were settled on the demesne. The *gwyr gwaith* (lit. - "workmen") were required to perform building and carrying works as well as pay an annual rent. The *gwyr mal* (lit. "tax" or "tribute men") paid a money rent and owed suit of mill. Carr suggests that *gwyr mal* tenure "may have developed in the thirteenth century to help persuade people to settle on the Prince's land" (Carr 1982 210). In this respect it is the *gwyr gwaith* tenants located in the south of the township who most resemble the traditional *maerdref* tenants (Stephenson 1984 59).

LLYS BUILDINGS

By far the most detailed list of court building is contained in the extent of 1352. Mention is made of the hall, chamber, chapel, privy, pantry and buttery. Some of the court buildings may have been repaired in 1337-8 (Carr 1982 123), and by 1352 both the free and bond tenants of the commote were paying a fine in lieu of the obligations to work on the court buildings (Carr 1971 233).

LATER HISTORY

In 1571 the lessee of the town and Lordship of "Penros" which included two corn mills was Peter ap David ap Rice (CPR P382). By 1591-2 the vill and lordship of Penrhos was leased by William Pierce and Hugh ap Pierce ap David ap Reece (Lewis Conway Davies 1954 185). The manor of Penrhos is not included in the crown survey of 1608, and by the early seventeenth century Pierce Lloyd junior (sheriff of Anglesey 1612 1638 + 1657) is referred to as living at one of the Lloyd family houses at Lligwy. (Lligwy MS 966 1647/8 refers to Pierce Lloyd of Lligwy). His father Pierce Lloyd of Gwredog was sheriff of Anglesey in 1603 and supposedly had the most extensive landed property in Anglesey (Llwyd 1833 21). On the 9th May 1656 Pierce Lloyd Junior was the chief Juror of an inquisition into Crown lands in Anglesey. The jurors could only identify Beaumaris castle and town walls as being part of the crown lands in Anglesey (Plas Coch MS 456).

The collection of Lligwy papers housed at the UCNW Archive contain information relating to the manor of Penrhos from the late seventeenth century onwards. The manor of Penrhos is referred to in Lligwy MS 1175 (1695/6). The Lligwy properties in Anglesey were bought by Lord Uxbridge in the 1740s (Lligwy MS 1180 to 1198 also 879-882) and subsequently passed to his nephew Sir Williams Irby (Lord Boston). The collection contains a number of late eighteenth century estate maps which include a list of field names for the estate. The Lligwy lands in Penrhos included most of the Parish of Penrhoslligwy. Included in the estate papers are a number of manorial court rolls of the late nineteenth century (the manorial court was often held at Efailfawr Inn in the north of the parish) as well as papers concerning the extent of the manor of Penrhoslligwy (Lligwy MS 1671 & 1859). One of the witnesses recalls walking the manor boundary with Lord Boston's steward in the 1820s, when the boundaries of the manor were conterminous with the Parish boundary.

The Lloyd family had a house at Lligwy at least as early as the mid seventeenth century. The family held some of the major offices on Anglesey from early in the seventeenth century. It is not at present possible to demonstrate what legal title the Lloyds had, if any, for the manor of Penrhoslligwy. The manor may have been acquired by a crown grant or through a marriage settlement; it is also possible that the family may have appropriated the manor and had no proper title. The absence of the manor from the crown survey of 1608 suggests that this may have occurred before this date.

Maps

OS

Lligwy Estate Surveys late 18th century Lligwy MS 1111-15 and 1413-16.

Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

Fieldwalking was undertaken in the area of Gadlys and Lligwy, and a number of new sites were added to the SMR.

Geophysical

Assessment excavation

Antiquarian References

The location of the *Llys* at Penrhoslligwy is believed to have been at the site of Y Gadlys (see for example Jones 1955 41, Carr 1982 39, Baynes 1921 26 32 1920 41).

Morris L Celtic Remains 1872 59 184

"Gadlys or Gadles or as some will y Gauadlys, a place in Anglesey, said to be the seat of Maelgwyn (ap Owain Gwynedd I suppose)"

"Gadlys, a king's temporary camp or palace....

Y Gadlys near Dulas Anglesey".

As with all Gadlys place names caution must be exercised when considering the significance of the name. On the Lligwy estate survey of 1773 the name is given as Gadlas and a tithe barn is located on the site (Gadlas = Rickyard). Baynes refers to the farm as Gadlys or Gadlas. The earliest OS maps refer to the site as Gadlas and the Parish register from 1744 onwards refers to the site as Gadlas. However in 1830 the site is listed as Gadlus. Lewis Morri's own annotated map of the Lligwy area uses Gadlys. In this instance it is clear that the terms are interchangeable.

The only other antiquarian to refer to the site is Fenton writing in 1810

"The princes of North Wales had four Manors and Palaces in Anglesey, which were castles much like those in Ireland, as I conjecture by a small part of one yet standing. One at Aberffraw, another at Rhosfair, now called Newborough; another at Penrhôs, where it is to be seen at this day a piece of the Palace called Y Gadlys" (Fenton 1810 350).

Capel Halen

Capel Halen is believed to have been the chapel of the court complex (Carr 1982 39). Baynes believed the site to be that of Llanelen mentioned in the Norwich Taxation of 1253 and again in the Taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291. This attribution however is far from certain. The 1773 Lligwy estate survey marks the site as 'old chappel', the present building is a farmhouse and part of a water stoop was 'found in the wall' (Baynes 1920 41). The area attached to Capel Elen is currently a Caravan Park and there has been considerable landscaping towards this end. Some building foundations were apparently still visible some years ago.

The location of the mills mentioned in the extent is discussed by Baynes; the mill of Bryngoythe was situated on the Glanrafon stream and demolished in the seventeenth century (Baynes 1921 22).

INTERPRETATION

There has been some attempt to extract the maximum topographical information from the medieval extent (Baynes 1920 and Jones 1957). The *gwyr gwaith* and the majority of the *gwyr mal* tenants owed suit to the mill of Bringoythe, implying that they were located to the South of Afon Lligwy. The *gwyr tir bwrdd* and the smiths, court gatekeepers and the squires of the *tir mal* holdings owed suit at Dulas mill and were therefore probably located to the north of Afon Lligwy, and thus according to G R Jones near the *Llys* at Gadlys (Jones 1955 41).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It appears unlikely that anything short of trial trenching would add any new information about the exact location of the *llys* at Penrhoslligwy. Landscaping work on the caravan park does not appear to require planning permission and there is therefore no mechanism by which to monitor any ground disturbance.

PWLLHELI

Commote of Cafflogion.
NGR SH 376 352

Located in a sheltered position on the south-eastern end of the Llŷn peninsula, facing Cardigan Bay.

EARLY HISTORY

The main source for the history of Pwllheli are T Jones Pierce "A Caernarfonshire Manorial Borough" (Jones Pierce 1972) and D A Lloyd Hughes "Pwllheli an old Welsh Town and its History" (Hughes 1991). The following is a brief summary of the main points.

The earliest reference to Pwllheli occurs in the Edwardian extent of 1284. Here as at Llanfaes and Nefyn the bond *maerdref* community had been superseded by a Borough. In 1284 the Borough consisted of twenty-one households and held two annual fairs. The manor of Pwllheli consisted of 180 acres or three carucates of demesne, of which on the eve of the Edwardian conquest one carucate was leased to Rhirid ap Cadwgan and the remaining two carucates "remained as the directly exploited resource of the Princes" (Stephenson 1984 57). The nucleus of the Medieval Borough was "situated on either side of the opening from High Street into modern Pen y Lan street" (Jones Pierce 1972 135).

LLYS BUILDINGS

The Caernarvonshire sheriff's account 1306-7 refers to the hall of the manor, the private chamber of the solar and the hawkhouse. A charge of £2.00 was added to the farm of the manor later in the fourteenth century in lieu of the "obligations of maintaining the *llys* in repair" (Jones Pierce 1972 147).

Edward I stayed at Pwllheli on 4 August 1284.

LATER HISTORY

The earliest known grant of the manor was to Edmund de Dynieton in 1317 together with the *maerdref* of Neigwl; later grants of 1322, 1334, and 1349 are listed in Jones Pierce p148. Pwllheli received its borough charter in 1355. The town went into decline as a result of

Glyndwr's rebellion, "the inhabitants having fled leaving their property to be laid waste" (T Jones Pierce 1973 156). The recovery of the town was slow, it did not regain any real urban character until the middle of the sixteenth century (in 1547 the population had recovered to twenty-one families and expanded rapidly thereafter with a population of over 300 by the beginning of the seventeenth century).

TOPOGRAPHICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Jones Pierce located the demesne near Henllys and the church and a smaller area below the east side of the garn and west of Henllys at Pen y Dalar and Caeau Bychion. The waste was located in the outer manor and is recorded in the place names, Ffridd and Rhos.

The manor was conterminous with the Parish which has from time to time enlarged. Lloyd Hughes suggests that Morfa mawr and Carreg yr Imbyll were absorbed into the manor (some 300 acres) sometime between the late sixteenth century and the 1830s. The borough was additionally extended in the 1830s to include parts of the Parish of Llannor and Abererch; these were not incorporated in to the Parish of Deneio until 1894. Of all the sites under consideration the medieval landscape of Pwllheli has been the most altered over the centuries.

Maps

OS

Lewis Morris Plans in St Georges Channel 1748

Newborough estate survey 1815

Survey by J Woods 1834

Tithe map

Parliamentary Boundary Commission 1838

Antiquarian References

The earliest antiquarian reference to the "llys" comes from Leland's Itinerary.

"Pollele Bay a poore market, now a late statio opt carinis. The Prince had a palace there, as yet apperith." (Leland 1906 88).

Place name indicators

Possible indicators of the location of the *llys* complex are to be found in the place names Gadlys, Pen y Mount and Henllys. T Jones Pierce first suggested that Leland's reference may have referred to the site known as Pen y Mount "a name which suggests the presence of an artificial mound" (Jones Pierce 1972 135). He also drew attention to the quillet known as Llain y Twr which would have faced y mount. Lloyd Hughes also discussed the significance of the name and added that "the remnant of a large mound of earth was seen at the rear of Penmount square" and he further suggests that there had been a considerable amount of earth removal when a new chapel was built in 1801 and again in 1860 (Hughes 1991 4). The site is referred to in the 1720s as Y Mount in the Llanerch Fawr estate papers.

The name Cadlys/Gadlys, applied to the opening of Penlan Street (in Wood's plan of 1834), was also noted by T J Pierce, as the possible site of Leland's palace as well as Pen y Mount. Lloyd Hughes added the additional information

"until the middle of the last century the Gadlys area included what appears to have been a substantial old building that was called Yr Hendre Gadredd, a name which itself suggests some sort of fortified residence. The building, unfortunately was demolished during the 1830s "by which time it was a ruin" (Hughes 1991 4 23).

INTERPRETATION

Jones Pierce suggests that the 'borough' of Pwllheli is likely to have been a new and deliberate creation in the thirteenth century, "the apparent symmetry of the Pwllheli burgages appears to reflect an artificial creation of recent date rather than a gradual transformation brought about by a combination of processes in the older Urban Centres" (Jones Pierce 1972 143), the implication being that the original manorial centre is likely to have been in the vicinity of Henllys and near the site of St. Beuno's chapel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the fact that Pwllheli was an important administrative and commercial centre in the middle ages there has yet to be any methodical excavation within the town. That such excavations might one day be feasible depends on the pace of commercial or residential development. Fieldwork and geophysical survey might however be productive north of the town in the area of Henllys.

RHOSYR

Commote of Menai.
NGR SH420 655

Located between the estuaries of the Braint and the Cefni on the south west coast of Anglesey.

EARLY HISTORY

The earliest reference to Rhosyr is possibly the reference to a Norman force sacking the churches of St Peter's and St Mary's in 1157 (probably Rhosyr and Llanfair-yn-cwmwd)(Carr 1982 267). Llywelyn ab Iorwerth signed a charter from Rosver in 1237 (Charter Rolls 11 460), and Edward I stayed at Rhosyr on the 29 July 1283.

The pre-conquest settlement at Rhosyr may have had some of the features already apparent at other commotal centres, namely a fair and a market. The fair tolls amounted to £1 14s. 3 1-2d in 1296-7 and the market tolls to ten shillings, in 1302-3 the tolls on the market at Rhosyr were farmed to Roger of Rhosyr at £8 (Carr 1982 258).

The establishment of the Borough of Newborough in 1303 created for the displaced tenants of Llanfaes involved the appropriation of "90 1/2 acres with 12 1/2 perches of the demesne of Rhosyr.... excepting 4 acres taken up by the Royal Roads; the whole of the demesne lands were granted to the old burgesses of Llanfaes. The Township of Rhosir contained more than 600 acres of land and in 1305 the burgesses of Newborough applied to hold the remainder of the domain", the borough never succeeded in absorbing the whole demesne" (Lewis 1912 52). On 6 Dec 1332 186 acres of the borough land was lost to a sand storm and another twenty eight acres and eleven cottages of the king's tenants were also lost at the same time.

The extent of 1352 provides further details on the composition of the holdings which had not been incorporated within the new borough. Within the Township of Rhosyr there were three types of tenure, tre gweluog bond tenants *Maerdref* tenants and garden men; these properties are often subsequently referred to as Hendre Rossir.

In 1309 and again in 1331 the commote of Menai was granted to Queen Isabella (having previously been granted to Eleanor of Castile) and subsequently in 1345 to Edward III (Carr 1982 70). Thereafter the manor of Rhosyr was usually farmed by the descendants of Llywarch ap Bran. Mareddydd ap Cynwrig was the farmer of the manor of Rhosyr in 1378-9 and again in 1421-2 when he was also farming the borough of Newborough. In 1396-7 Hwlwyn ap Dafydd

ap Ieuan was the farmer of the Manor. (For a full account of the history of Rhosyr and Newborough in the 14th and 15th century see Carr 1982 70 261 369).

LLYS BUILDINGS

In 1305 the men of the commote of Menai asked for timber to re-build the hall of the manor of Rhosyr (Carr 1982 20). Further information on the layout of the Court is provided in the extent of 1352. The tref gyfrif tenants of the township of Dinan were expected to work on the lord's manor of Rhosyr and make.... the fence around the lords Manor and part of his chapel and the Rhaglaws chamber and the lords privy and stable (Carr 1971-2 247).

In 1337 the work due on the court by the men of the maerdref was commuted to an annual payment of 23s 4d. (Owen H 1952 5).

LATER HISTORY

By the mid 16th century the Manor of Rhosyr was included in the jurisdiction of the Steward of Rhos-fayre and often referred to as part of the " Soythe porth". The jurisdiction of the Steward included the hamlets of Tref Garwent, Trefibion, Plith, Rhoscelyn, Hendriff, Rhoscolyn and Mardreff in the Swyth Porth. The above mentioned hamlets were held in the 1560's by Lewis Owen ap Merick, John ap Ieuan ap Meredith etc. (see Lewis Conway Davies 1954 4 11 183 195).

The Crown extent of Anglesey and Cvon LR2 205 of 1608, noted that William Owen and others "held by a lease of 9 Feb 1568 granted to Lewis Owen ap Meurig, Edward ap John Lloyd etc.... lands in Hendre Rhosfair and *Maerdref*. There then follows a list of farm names (many still recognisable) and field names together with the information that five of the named tenants held land in Faerdre.

In July 1629 the Corporation of London, which had aquired "the township of Rhosfayr with the hamlet of Tregarnedd (or Tregarwedd), Trefmeibion, Pill, *Maerdref* and Rhoscolyn" from the Crown sold the properties to William Owen of Brondeg.

Subsequently the Brondeg estate passed to the Owens of Bodowen. Huw Owen succeeded to the estate of Brondeg by the will of Ellen Owen the last heir of Brondeg (Rowlands H 1846 307, also NLW Orielton papers parcel 4 and 12).

The Pool papers concerning the Bodowen estate housed in the Record Office of Caernarfon (Pool MS 1489, 1490, 1492, 1493) contain rentals of "the chief rents or kings rents issuing out of Rhosvair and Hendre in the town and Parish of Llanbedr Newborough (the earliest rentals are from 1727 - 54). There is a separate list of chief rents in Rhoscolyn and Llechcynfarwy Pool MS 1496. The Owen family began to dispose of its property in Anglesey in the early 19th century (see for example Pool MS 1781) and much of the estate was sold in 1815 to the Hughes Family of Kimmel (see Llus Dulas MS). Fig. plots the properties in Hendre and Rhosvair held by the Owen family, although not all of the farm names are still recognisable (for a full list see Pool MS 1741 or 1496).

LANDOWNERSHIP

The present Parish of Newborough contains the Township of Rhosyr (including the borough lands of Newborough) and the township of Llanddwyn. (Tithe map 1840s Land Tax of 1745 etc). The extent of the borough lands are described by Henry Rowlands and helpful notes on the boundary are available in H Owen Hanes Plwyf Niwbwrch. However it does not appear possible to recreate the borough boundary with any great accuracy. Nevertheless the majority of the remainder of the Manor i.e. Hendre Rhosir is mainly located to the west and south west

of the borough lands

In attempting to recreate the medieval landscape at Rhosyr, the land enclosures of the 19th century should also be taken into account as well as the extent of the township of Llanddwyn. Llanddwyn was originally an ecclesiastical township of the Bishop of Bangor. Henry Rowlands noted that the township was subject to the Bishop of Bangor and that the "remaining land of this township belongs to the Bodowen family having been granted by some Bishops of Bangor to be held as a warren". (Rowlands then describes the extent of the township as about two miles in both length and breadth and adds that the other portion of the parish (presumably distinct from the projecting peninsula he has been originally describing) "is entirely sandy and uncultivated if you accept a few holdings near Newborough" (Rowlands H 1846 128-35). Some attempt can be made to reconstruct the extent of the township using the tithe map in conjunction with maps of Newborough land enclosures (Owen H 1952 37-43). It should however be borne in mind that by the 1840s the Owens of Bodowens property had been sold, the Hughes family of Kimmel purchasing part of the estate as they had in Aberffraw (see for example Pool ms 1780 & 1781 for the sale of the Bodowen fee farm rents in "Newborough" parish, also Glynllifon MS 6094 for details of exchanges of lands in Llanddwyn between Glynllifon and Llus Dulas estates).

Llanddwyn therefore is likely to be nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 + 12 on the Tithe map. Nos 8-9-10-6-7 were still owned by the Bishop of Bangor in the 1840s.

Maps

OS

Tithe map

Lligwy estate (lord Boston estate maps)

Antiquarian References

Several antiquarian references refer to the ruins of the *Llys* south of the church. Henry Rowlands *Antiquitates Parochiales Arch Cambs* 1856 311

"With respect to the Prince's Palace which the Royal Extent ... repeatedly affirms to have formerly stood in the district, nothing now besides vestiges of the walls, lately uncovered by the sands, forming a square area, if one may measure a thing by its mere shadow can be shown; which place is, to this day commonly called by the natives, *Llys* ie Court. It is not far distant, too on the South side, from the church of Newborough; indeed it nearly adjoins it". The site is also mentioned by Lewis Morris in NLW General Collection 607A Topographical and Archaeological notes on the coast of Wales.

"*Llys Llywelyn* South of the church ruins"

While the name *Cae Llys* is still applied to a field south west of the Parish Church (the field name was constantly brought to our attention by many local people during the excavations) it is of some interest that the field name can not be found in any documentation. There are no field names on the Newborough Tithe map, neither are there any estate maps for the area which might otherwise have supplied this information.

Surface Fieldwork

While the area adjacent to the church is still mainly farm land, several planning applications for residential development have been approved, the most recent immediately east of *Cae Llys*. In the 1970 a Welsh Water mains was laid, cutting across the south west corner of *cae llys*.

Geophysical

Magnetometer Resistivity and Ground Probing Radar

Assessment excavations

(see separate summary)

TAL Y BONT

Commote of Tal y bont
NGR SH 595 039

Located on the north bank of the Dysynnu near its estuary with the sea on the coast of Meirionnydd. A motte was constructed 300m south of an important crossing of the Dysynnu.

EARLY HISTORY

The principle royal bond lands in the commote of Tal y Bont were located in Tal y Bont, Dolgellau and Garthgynfawr. A reference to the court of the manor of Tal y Bont in the extent of 1284 possibly refers to Tal y Bont rather than Dolgellau. However there may have been a residence at both locations, indeed Stephenson considered Dolgellau to be the *maerdref* of the commote (Stephenson 1984 59). Edward I visited Dolgellau and Tal y Bont in 1295 (Edward stayed at Dolgellau from 11 to 13 of May). The place name Hengwrt north of Dolgellau may be an indicator of the location of a former high status residence.

Dolgellau appears to have grown from a small hamlet with three recorded tax payers in 1292-3 to become the principle town in the area by the sixteenth century (Soulsby 1983 131). During the fourteenth century Dolgellau was made the seat of the local hundred or commote court. It is interesting to note that both Dolgellau and Pennal later became important centres for Owain Glyndwr (similarly at the commotal centre of Bala a royal garrison was established during Glyndwr's rebellion).

Llywelyn ap Gruffydd addressed a letter from Tal y bont in 1278/9 Edward I stayed at Tal y Bont from 14 to 17 May 1295. The extent of Meirioneth for 1284 records that one of the two villein tenants of Tal y Bont paid a fine for the right to live at Towyn.

LATER HISTORY

The parish of Llanergyn contains the township of Peniarth, Rhyd y Cryw and Tal y Bont, almost all of which were obtained by the Peniarth estate from the fifteenth century onwards (NLW Peniarth MS). "The manor (ie the demesne) continued to be held by the crown and was leased from time to time until the reign of James I" (Wynne W W E 1879 125). One of the lessees in the mid sixteenth century refers to the demesne and mill of Llanegryn, the crown farmer was Lewis ap Owen of Peniarth (Lewis and Conway Davies 1954 428). The crown property was then apparently sold to John Wotton and George Bingley and by them to Griffith Owen, Lewis Owen's son, on 12 November 1615 (NLW Peniarth MS 500). From 1650 onwards the property became a part of the Peniarth estate.

Surface fieldwork

The motte at Tal y Bont referred to as Domen Ddreiniog measures 34m in diameter about its base, 15m across the top and is 7m high. The motte is covered with mature trees and is badly eroded through cattle and vermin activity on the north and west sides in particular.

INTERPRETATION

see similar section on Pennal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Geophysical survey and schedule enhancement around the base of the motte. Restoration work on the motte.

TREFRIW

Commote of Nantconwy
NGR SH 780 630

Located on the west bank of the Conway river, north-west of Llanrwst

EARLY HISTORY

Trefriw is traditionally associated with Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, who is supposed to have built the church of Trefriw around 1230 "for the ease of his princess, who before was obliged to go on foot to Llanrhychwyn, a long walk among the mountains" (Lewis S 1842 302). The same tradition is mentioned earlier by Pennant (Pennant 1788 155).

The extent of 1352 contains a wealth of information on the layout of the unfree township of Trefriw. Within the township there were four and a half *gaveillion*, namely *Gavael* Nefydd, *Gavael* Coed Wedir, *Gavael* Gwrgeneu, *Gavael* Gadrod and half of the *Gavael* of Ruwon ap Meilir and the ffridd of Bryn Tyrch. Rents for the four full gaveillion were fairly similar, 40s, 43s, 37s, 41s and 22s for the half *gavael* of Ruwon ap Meilir.

The Abbot of Aberconwy paid £8 for the farm of the manor of Trefriw. The profits of the manor included suit to the lord's mill at Trefriw, twenty acres of meadow in demesne, the tolls of the commote and the fishery of the Conwy.

In 1330 Gronow Loit of Penwyn petitioned the King for a grant of the manor and the Mill of Trefriw, and in 1334 custody of the manor was granted to William de Pinarton for life. (CAP 85 Rowlands E D 1948 181).

LLYS BUILDINGS

Edward I stayed at Trefriw on 1 and 2 June 1284 and again on 29 June 1295. In 1303-4 the sheriff of Caernarfon accounted for "5 shillings for the repair of a certain old house of the princes at Trefriw which is called yteduy" (Y Ty Du) (Waters 1934 144).

LATER HISTORY

The acquisition of the various gaveillion in the manor of Trefriw by the Wynns of Gwydir is discussed in full in "The Wynn family and the estate of Gwydir" (Phd thesis Cardiff Jones G 1974) and the following is a brief summary. Other lessees of the gaveillion at Trefriw are referred to in Records of the Court of Augmentation (Lewis, Conway Davies 1954 277 279 291 300).

In 1614 Sir John Wynn "purchased in fee farm the ffriddoedd of Dolwyddelan and Gafael Wilym, Gafael Gadrod, Gafael Newydd and Gafael Coed Gwedir in Trewydir and Trefriw which as he remarked 'in effect is all the kings lands in Gwedyr and Trevrew' (Jones G 1974 91). At the same time he also purchased Tir Mal in Prysor and a fourth part of Ffridd Prysor."

The Gwydir Estate had been acquiring various leases to gaveilion in Trefriw from at least as early as the 1520s (Jones G 1974 43 45). Of the purchases of 1614 only *gavael* Rhun ap Meilir and *Gavael* gurgeni are missing, and these appear to have been part of the Wynn's earliest Crown leases in Trefriw and were included in Morus Wynn's possessions in the 1570s.

The manor of Trefriw is listed as part of the Gwydir Estate in 1616 (NLW MS 9656C 779) and again in 1653 (NLW MS 9064E 2031). That the "manor" of Trefriw appears to have maintained a separate identity from the gaveilion appears to be suggested in an action recorded in the Exchequer Proceedings for 1594 (Jones E G 1939 59-60). The action concerns a dispute over the crown lease of the water corn mill, the crown meadows and the fisheries of Nantconwy and a waste called Gwerne Veignagh. The earliest Gwydir estate rentals currently available (Gwydir Estate Collection Caernarfon Archives MS 234 1758-1759) contain little information as to the location of the *gavaelion* still mentioned up until 1614, however it is possible to suggest the location of two of the gaveilion, *Gavael* Coed Gwydir and *Gavael* Newid (see accompanying map). The King's meadow is accounted for separately in the earliest estate rental (although by now only nine acres). It seems likely that the township of Trefriw would have been conterminous with the Parish boundary.

Further Gwydir estate papers and surveys which might provide additional information which were previously housed at the Lincoln archive, are currently being recatalogued at Grimthorpe Castle before being deposited at the Caernarfon Record Office.

Maps

OS

Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

Gardd y Neuadd is noted in the estate rentals from 1758 onwards and on the Tithe map. The site was being ploughed in the late eighteenth century. It is presently used as a coal yard and mainly covered by tarmac and concrete. In the 1950s a fairly substantial bank was constructed along side the river to prevent flooding.

The most recent development has been the construction of a "house" to the rear of the village pub adjacent to the area of Gardd y Neuadd. During construction unmortared walls were observed at some depth (information obtained locally). It is believed that the site may soon change hands with the intention of applying for planning permission for housing development. At the time of writing planning permission had been granted and an archaeological evaluation is a condition of the planning permission.

Geophysical

Assessment excavation

Antiquarian references

Leland Itinerary in Wales (c. 1536-9) (ed Toulmin Smith 1966 84)

"Castelles in CairArvonshire"

Treurewe (a mile from Conwey Abbey) where Lluellen lay that married Jane, King John's doughtre. It stondith on Conwey and Treurewe rivers".

Pennant Tours in Wales 1773-6 (ed Rhys 1883, 154)

"It is said that Llywelyn the Great had near this place a palace; and, as a proof, fveral ftones have been found, in ploughing a field called Gardd y Neuadd...."

Lewis S - Topographical dictionary

"Llywelyn ap Iorwerth is stated to have had a palace here, situated in a place now called Gardd y Neuadd, where some hewn stones were discovered, which have since been used in building a wall, and are pointed out as the only remaining fragment of the royal habitation". The antiquarian references suggest that the "court" buildings were located more or less adjacent to the church as appears to be the case at Rhosyr and Aberffraw.

INTERPRETATION

The survival of the village owes much to its locations. In the eighteenth century vessels of up to sixty tons were able to travel up to Trefriw on the river Conwy with goods destined for Llanrwst and neighbouring parishes (Lewis M 1842). By the thirteenth century Trefriw had established itself as a small market town (Lewis 1912 175 180 194, Carr 19XX 23). This was no doubt due to Royal patronage and mirrors similar urban developments at other royal centres such as Nefyn and Llanfaes. Antiquarian observations suggest that the thirteenth century court buildings were in the area now known as gardd y neuadd. There is a tradition among locals that some of the remains were used as building material when the chapel (now village hall) was constructed in the last century.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Assessment excavation if possible. This vacant plot within the village will almost certainly come up for some form of development or other in the next few years.

YSTUMGWERN

Commote of Is Artro (Ardudwy)
NGR SH 582 250

coastal location in northern Meirionnydd

EARLY HISTORY

The Edwardian extent of 1284 records that the parish of Llanenddwyn (in Ardudwy parishes acted in the same way as civil townships in other commotes, a fact first noted by K Williams Jones 1965) contained twenty-four gaveilion and one carucate that was probably the former demesne of the manor. A portion of the demesne had been given to the burgesses of Harlech after the conquest. The borough of Harlech had been granted lands in detached plots in the vills of Trawsfynydd, Maentwrog, Llanenddwyn, Llanaber, Llanddywe, Llandecwyn, Ffestiniog and Nantcoyl Common (the common of the manor). The Harlech property in Llanenddwyn amounted to 123 acres (Lloyd LW, 1986 19). There is no further information on the Harlech borough property as it is included in the free farm rent granted to the borough in 1316. Gresham has suggested that the remainder of the demesne was allocated to the dispossessed bond tenants of Harlech (Gresham 1988).

LLYS BUILDINGS

The hall at Ystumgwern was removed to Harlech Castle in 1307

LATER HISTORY

More information on the layout of the parish is forthcoming in the Extent of 1420. The Parish contained twenty-four gaveilion: thirteen gaveilion of native land, seven gaveilion of tir mal

and four gavelion called Y Faerdref. In this respect it is little different to the arrangements of the manors of Penrhoslligwy and Cemaes. The extent also records the existence of two free gwelyau, Y Thaildreff and Bron y Voel.

The names of the gavelion known as Y Faerdre are given; these are Gafael Gwyn y Moch, Gafael Ieuan ap Grono LLoc, Gafael Einion ap Grono y LLoc, and Gafael Cochlyn.

In 1560 the above mentioned *gavaels* in y Faerdre are included in "reference to the demesne lands at Ystumgwern" (Lewis Conway Davies 1954 428). The document concerns sixteen missing acres in the demesne, on which was located a chapel called Capel y Teulwyd. This is generally accepted as the chapel of the manor (Gresham 1986 224 + RCAHMW 1921 102). The chapel and sixteen acres were acquired by Hugh Owen of Bodeon and in 1573-4 given to the Corsygedol Estate. The site is now known as Gwern y Capel and is part of Ystumgwern Farm. (Ystumgwern Farm may be the 'Ystumgwern' mentioned in Peniarth MS 4IIE "List of grants leases etc passed from the crown of the revenues of North Wales 1631-1702"). The identification of the present farm Vaildre with Vairdre of the medieval surveys can be found in a marriage settlement of 1718 (Bryngwin Collection Z/DJ NO 198) in which the property is referred to as Vairdre alias Vaildre (Gresham 1988 225).

Under the Tithe Schedule field No.s 399 and 400 in Faeldre called Cae Gwyn nessa and Cae Gwyn pella may possibly refer to the *Gavael* Gwyn y Moch mentioned in 1420 and ?1560.

Gresham locates the borough lands of Harlech between Faildref and Taltreuddyn Farm to the north although at present there is no documentation to confirm the attribution. The rather complex arguments concerning the significance of the free gwely of Y Thaildreff are discussed by Gresham (Gresham 1988 221-226).

Maps

OS

Tithe map

Surface fieldwork

Gwern y Capel was visited by the Cambrians in 1850; the dimensions of the chapel are given as 38'6" by 15'9". The walls were apparently demolished some three years earlier and only the foundations were now visible. Inhumations within the chapel were apparently removed at the same time and used for manuring. In 1856 it was recalled that even in 1843 the foundations of the building still stood up to three or four feet high and the enclosure of the cemetery was still visible. The stones were removed during draining of the marshes for building material. (See also T Davies above cited for an account of WWE Wynne of Peniarth's attempts to prevent the dismantling of the remains of the chapel).

Gwern y Capel is marked on the 1839 OS map, the survey appears to show an enclosure around the church. On the 1840 Tithe Map field no 358 is called Gwern y Capel. The supposed location of the site is marked on the 1900 25"/1mile. In 1921 the RCAHMW were unable to locate any indications of the site, neither were there any traces of the site in 1972 (NAR 525SE No1).

The field is of high quality pasture with fairly large drainage ditches. In an unimproved corner of the field adjoining gwern y capel on the north west, there is a small rectangular house platform with low walls running off in various directions. There was no sign of any visible remains associated with the chapel. The remains of a small building slightly to the east of the chapel site survive as a low levelled platform. This building is shown on the earliest edition of the 25"/1mile OS map.

Geophysics

INTERPRETATION

There seems little reason to discount Gresham's views on the probable location of the demesne lands at Ystumgwern. Davies's suggestions regarding the location of the royal hall in the south of the parish near Ael y Bryn is undoubtedly the weaker argument of the two.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A full EDM and geophysical survey of the area around Gwern y Capel should be a priority.

TY'N Y MWD, ABER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION (GAT 1092)

prepared for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments

by N. Johnstone

illustrations by H.F. Riley

February 1994

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 86

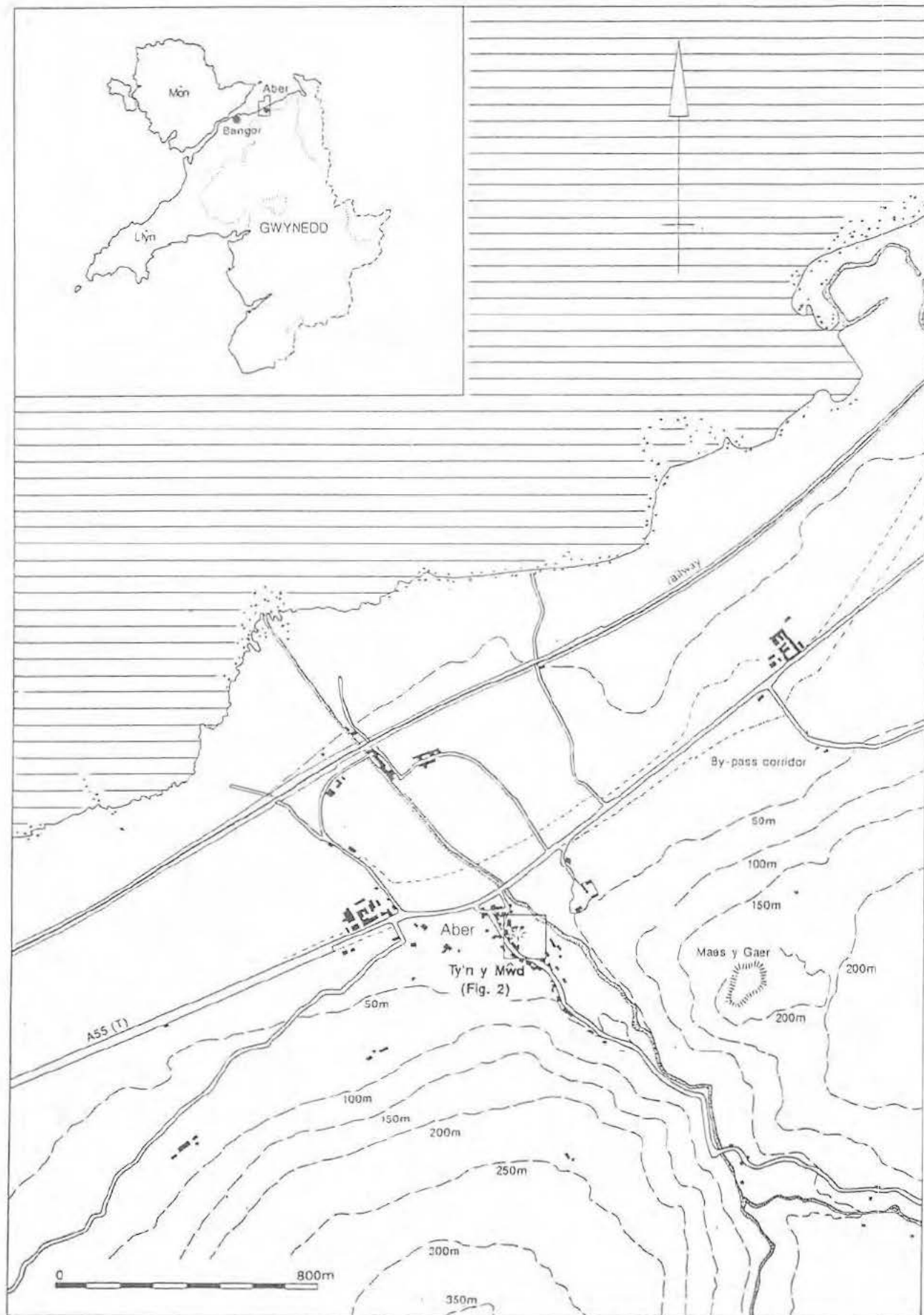


Fig. 1 Location map

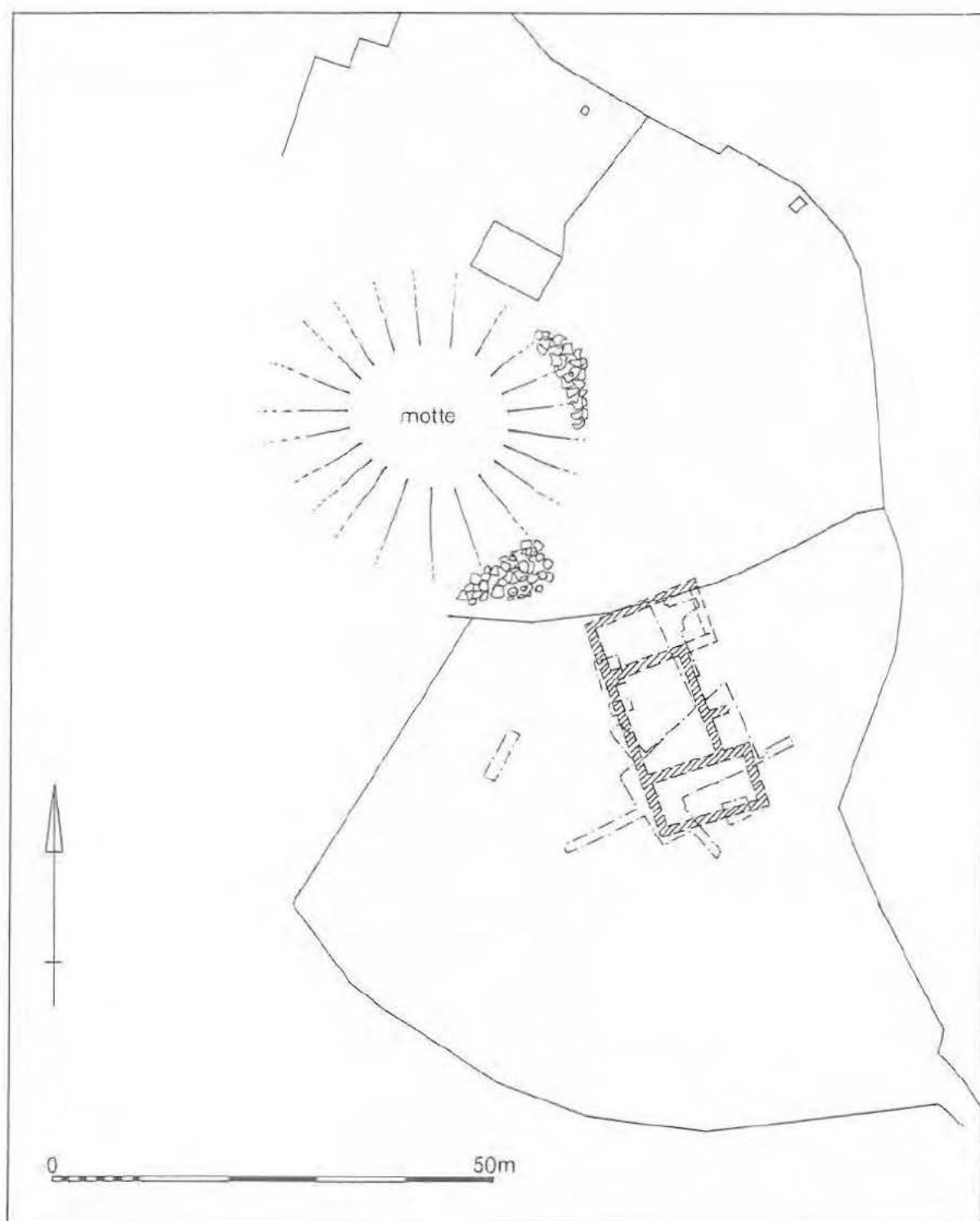


Fig. 2 Trench location.

TYN Y MWD, ABER

INTERIM STATEMENT

Background

In November 1993 Gwynedd Archaeological Trust undertook the excavation of an area at Tyn y Mwd, in Aber, SH 6568 7265 in a field immediately adjacent to the Norman Motte, Pen y Mwd, (SAM C007). The excavation was funded by Cadw as part of the Llys and Maerdref project and was aimed at clarifying the nature of the remains uncovered during an excavation in January 1993, occasioned by a planning application on that site.

The earlier assessment had identified the stone foundations of a rectilinear building in circumstantial association with mid 13th century pottery. However, while identifying the archaeological potential of the site, the nature and form of the structure remained uncertain. The excavation of November 1993 was intended to clarify the nature of the structure, and to this end a total of 120sq.m was excavated.

Excavation

An initial area totalling 80sq.m was opened to expand upon the results of the January excavation. Confirmation of the presence of a substantial stone structure led to the excavation of additional trenches in an attempt to recover a more complete building plan. On completion of the excavation the plan of a long rectangular structure aligned N-S, in three units with winged projections at north and south ends, could be postulated. The northern limit of this structure was incorporated in a later field boundary and, immediately to the south of this boundary, a post-medieval track had truncated deposits associated with the building. Ploughsoil and post-medieval deposits were cleared but no *in situ* stratified deposits associated with the structure were removed and excavation was halted at the horizon of the building foundations. The potential for identifying earlier structural detail, penetrating the subsoil, remains. A quantity of pottery was recovered, in the ploughsoil, at the interface between the ploughsoil and subsoil and in post-medieval contexts.

Structural remains

The foundations of a rectangular, three unit, building can be postulated from the excavated evidence. Acceptance of this interpretation would require a building 26m in total length with a central unit measuring 11.2 x 8m internally; a southern wing 10.8 x 5m internally and a northern wing less certainly c.13 x 5m internally. The width of the foundations is generally 1.1m with local variations and their composition is typically large sub-rounded boulder facing stones with rubble infill in brown silty clay. No evidence for thresholds or doors was identified and this is probably to be explained by the survival of the structure at foundation level only.

The absence of a hearth may be explained either by the incomplete excavation of the northern part of the central unit or by the almost complete removal in the course of later activities of original floor surfaces.

The structure had been robbed to a single course of its foundations except where localised preservation had occurred as, for example, where part of a later field boundary had incorporated original walling at the north end. In places the foundations themselves had been robbed.

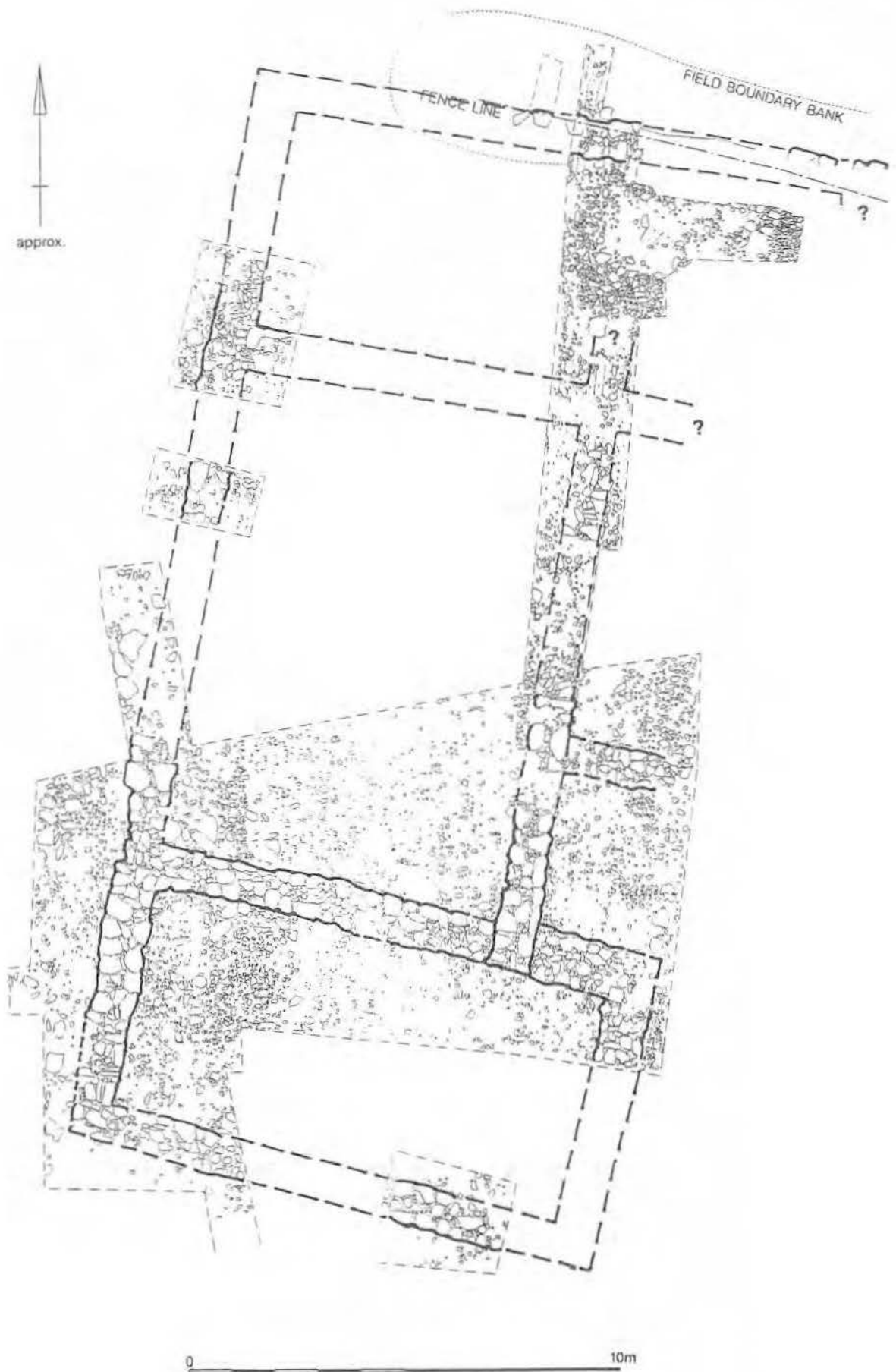


Fig. 3 Rectangular hall at Ty'n y Mwd.

The excavated evidence suggests the possible modification of an original structure in two instances.

- a) The south end of the east wall of the central unit has been truncated and the north wall of the south wing butts this wall at this point.
- b) The masonry of the north wing is mortared.

Artefacts

A quantity of pottery was recovered during the course of the excavations. The majority is post-medieval in date and occurs in the ploughsoil and in contexts associated with a post-medieval track which truncates the rectangular structure at its northern end.

Approximately thirty sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the ploughsoil and from the interface between the ploughsoil and subsoil. Preliminary analysis suggests that the majority is of the 13th and 14th centuries with a few sherds of the 14th or 15th centuries.

One bronze ring brooch 0.30m diameter with punched decoration was recovered. It is of 13th or 14th century date.

Conclusions

The building identified might best be interpreted as a three unit, winged hall house having undergone modification to reach its final form in the 14th century. Fig. 4 illustrates a selection of Caernarfonshire halls of the 14th century for comparison.

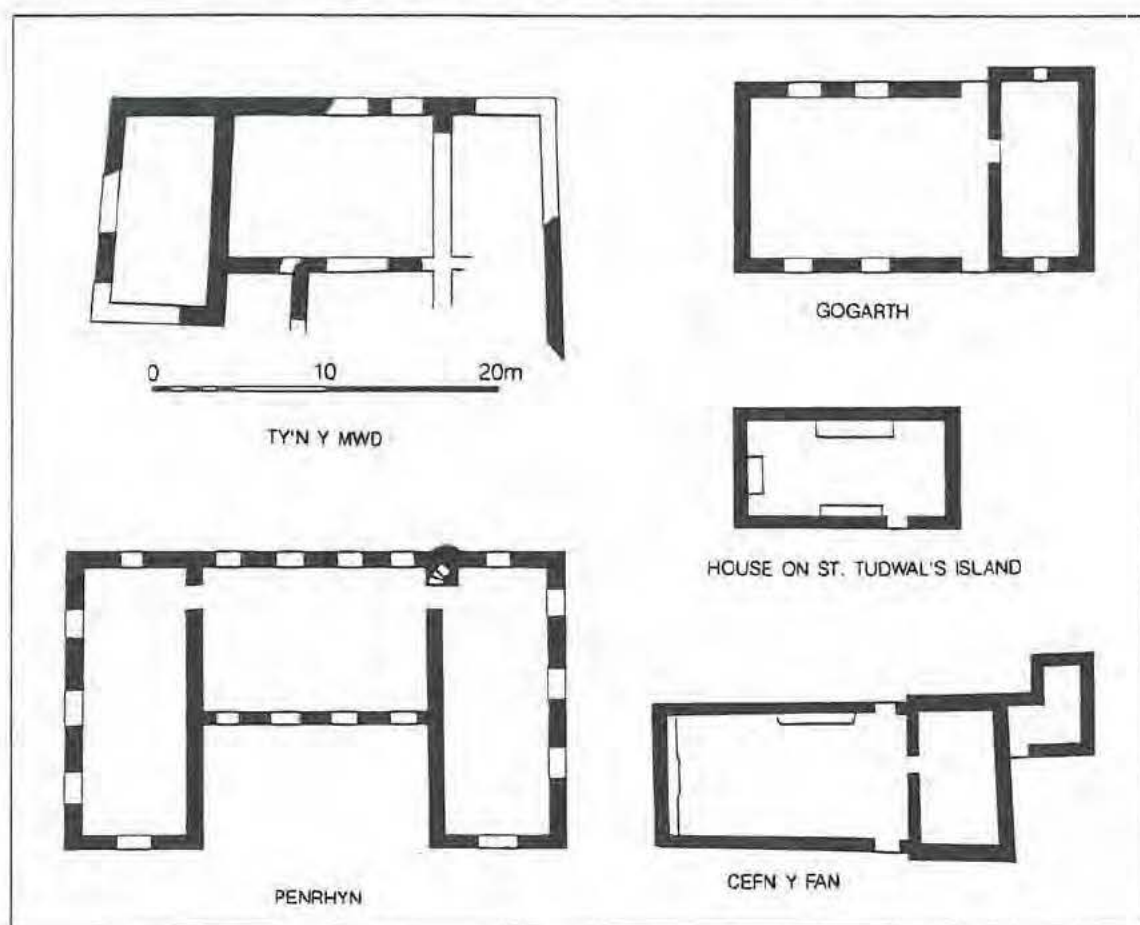


Fig. 4 Plan of Ty'n y Mwd showing comparisons to other Caernarfonshire Halls of C14th.

Antiquarian references consistently draw attention to the presence of building remains in the vicinity of the motte at Aber and some associate these remains with the pre-conquest *Llys*. In this connection, and with reference to the mortared masonry of the north wing, it might be appropriate to draw attention to the following Ministers' account of the early 14th century PRO.E101/485/30:

'In preparing the site of the Hall and Chamber [at Aber] at task 8/- To Masons supplying carriage of stone, setters, porters, and in carriage of sand at task by William of Kyrkby and Ithell of Bangor masons in the 3rd year of Prince Edward £17. 9s. 3d.

Total £17. 17s. 3d.'

'Further expenses laid out on the works of the Hall and Chamber of the Lord Prince at Aber in the 6th year of Prince Edward, by the hands of Richard of Hokenhall (? Hucknall), namely:-

In carriage of 4 boatloads of stone from the sea to Aber at task, at (several) times 4/-. And to hiring 2 carts with 2 horses and 2 boys (or grooms) for carrying stones of freestone, lime and sand, for 57 working days 28/6d. That is each taking 3d. a day.'

APPENDIX 2

Rhosyr

The site

Cae Llŷs is situated 100m to the south west of St. Peter's Church, Newborough. The church and the excavation area occupy the crest of a low but locally prominent ridge between the estuaries of the Braint and the Cefni on the south west coast of Anglesey. Edward I's planned new town, Newborough, lies 600m to the north east.

Background

Rhosyr is well documented as the maerdref of the commote of Menai. Llywelyn ap Iorwerth signed a charter here in 1237 and a fair and market were well established before the conquest. The pre-conquest demesne extended over 600 acres and in 1303 Newborough was established on these lands. Fourteenth century documents refer to some elements of the pre-conquest llys including the hall of the manor, the fence around the lord's manor, a chapel, rhaglaw's hall, privy and stable. In 1332 over 200 acres of land were lost to a sand storm and blown sand must have been a persistent problem. In the 18th century antiquarians could refer to the sand covered rectangular ruined walls of the former llys a short distance south of the church. By the 20th century nothing survived above the surface of a ploughed field.

Excavation

The local place name Cae Llŷs, the generalised locational information provided by antiquarian sources, the topography and circumstantial association of the church recommended the site for limited trial excavation during 1992-3. Structural debris, in-situ walling and stratified pottery of the 13th and 14th centuries confirmed the potential of the site for further work.

The 1994 excavations extended over an area of 750 sq.m. The principal features identified include a length of perimeter wall (26m), broken by a clearly defined 1.5m entrance; the stone foundations of a large (20m x 14m) building of at least two phases of construction; the foundations of a complex of walls and rooms extending from the large building and drains and paved surfaces in the space between the structure and the perimeter wall. Some of the masonry has been removed by stone robbing but much survives, standing 4-5 courses high in places, protected by blown sand. Coins of the early-mid 13th century and pottery of the 13th-14th century have been recovered.

The perimeter wall was uncovered in the eastern part of the excavation area. In parts the wall survived up to 0.60m high, expanding to 1.10-1.30m either side of the entrance. The facing stones had been carefully selected, in particular on the external face.

The walls of the large building had been badly robbed and the northern side was entirely defined by a stone robbing trench. This structure appears to have been of at least two phases. The earlier comprised a rectangular block 15m long (internal) by 9m wide. This unit was enlarged with the addition of a 2m wide range on the south side. This range contained a small division at the east and formed a room 2m by 4m. The continuation of both the north and south robber trenches beyond the limit of the surviving rectangular foundations implies a similar range on the west side of the building, giving a maximum length of 18m. An external stone surface was laid to the north of the structure and had been provided with a drain. Towards the east end of the building the drain was defined by a number of large capping stones some of which probably also served as a laid path leading into the structure. A number of internal features were excavated including the probable hearth, an oval plinth of stone with a number of heat shattered stones slightly off centre and at the west end of the building. A

further wall running parallel to the south side of the building survived to a height of 0.6m.

Between the building and the perimeter wall was a surface of compact pebbles and a path aligned on the entrance to the perimeter wall. The southern side of the path was flanked by a series of large flag stones which appear to pre-date the construction of the building and lead to a well laid surface of flat stones which may pre-date the eastern end of the building. Dressed sandstone mouldings attest the sophistication of the original structures.

At present there are no immediate parallels for the ground plan of the building at Cae Llys among the known medieval buildings of Gwynedd although a similar arrangement of rooms occurs at the much larger early 13th century aisled hall at Tintern Abbey (*Med Arch*, 1989). The dimensions of the rectangular block at Cae Llys are comparable to the dimensions of the largest known hall in the county, the Bishop's Palace at Gogarth.

Interpretation, significance and potential

The excavations of 1994 have revealed a complex of structures in association with datable artefacts. The most probable interpretation is that these structures are to be associated with the llys of the commote of Menai at Rhosyr. This in itself is a sufficient indicator of historical significance.

There are, however, considerations concerning the academic potential and conservation requirements of the site which might be addressed.

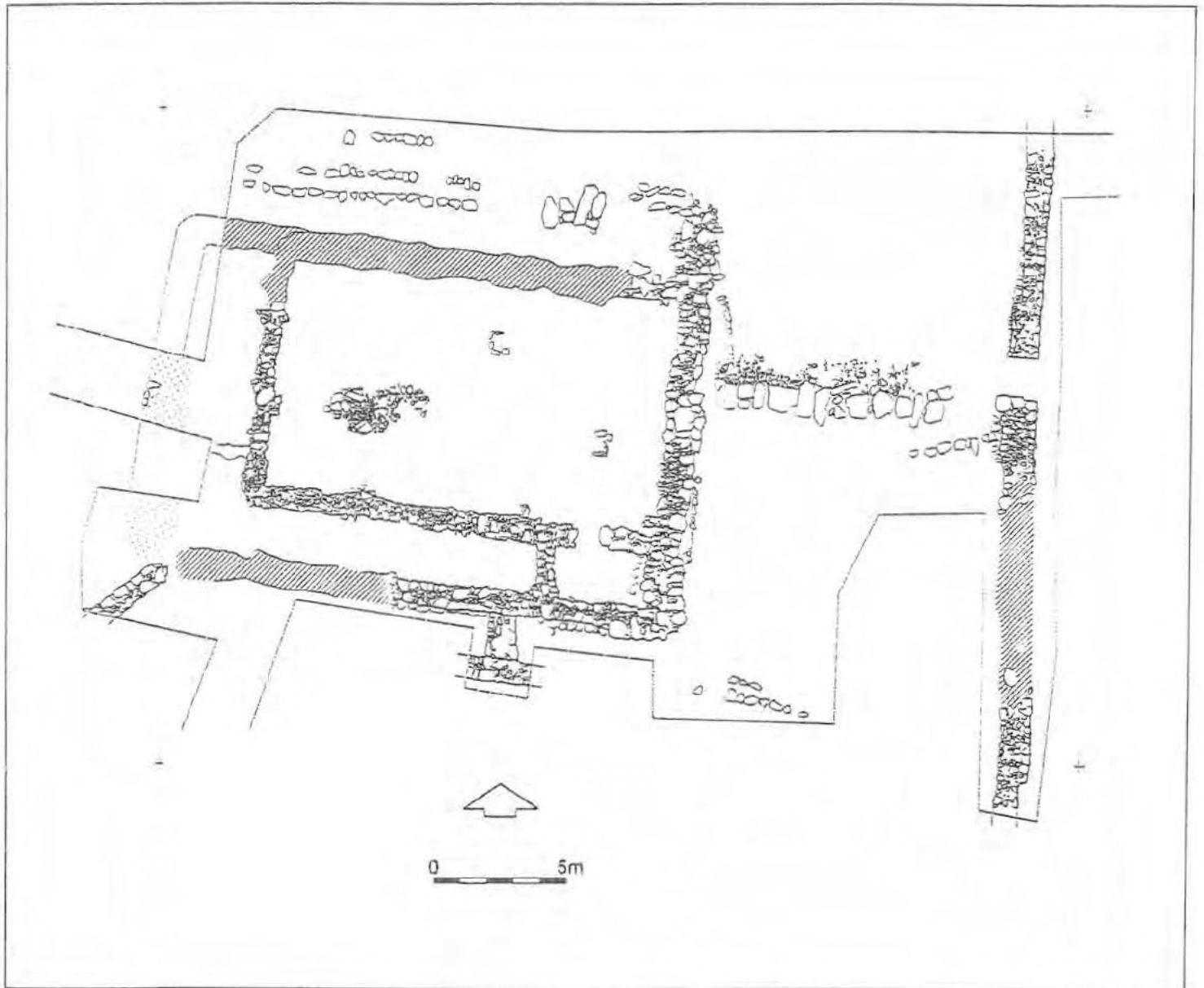
Firstly, the identified structures are part of a complex. The perimeter wall extends beyond the excavated area and incomplete interior structures are visible at the limits of excavation. Geophysical survey was only partially productive, probably because of the spread of demolition debris over the site. Nevertheless there are indications of structures to the north and west of those excavated.

Secondly, the principal structure excavated is clearly of more than one phase. Very few comparable buildings have been excavated in Gwynedd and none from a royal estate and centre of commotal administration. Questions arise concerning the development of building types through time and relationship of one structure to another within the complex - both spatially and functionally. The 'winged hall' at Aber is one constructional form, the large 'hall' at Rhosyr is another - are these functional or stylistic variations?

The archaeological dimension of Llysoedd and Maerdrefi is under-represented to the point of almost total non-existence. In order to provide a framework for the assessment of the significance and the identification of the component parts of the resource it would seem necessary to go some way towards establishing and understanding a type site. The open-site character of Cae Llys has the potential to do this.

The provision of statutory protection, should this be considered appropriate, requires an assessment of the extent of the monument. The presence of a delimiting perimeter wall provides the opportunity.

From an educational perspective the complex at Rhosyr provides an almost unique opportunity to examine and interpret the archaeology of a culture in transition. Attention has frequently been drawn to the predominance of 'English' high status monuments in the Welsh medieval landscape. At Rhosyr the potential exists for studying the process by which the Welsh llys and attendant church as nucleus of the pre-conquest royal estate are superseded by the development of a planted Edwardian borough. Newborough still retains the street plan and tenement layout of the early 14th century. There is potential for interpretation and possibly display and Ynys Mon Borough Council have expressed a serious interest in the possibilities.



Ground plan of the excavation at Rhosyr.

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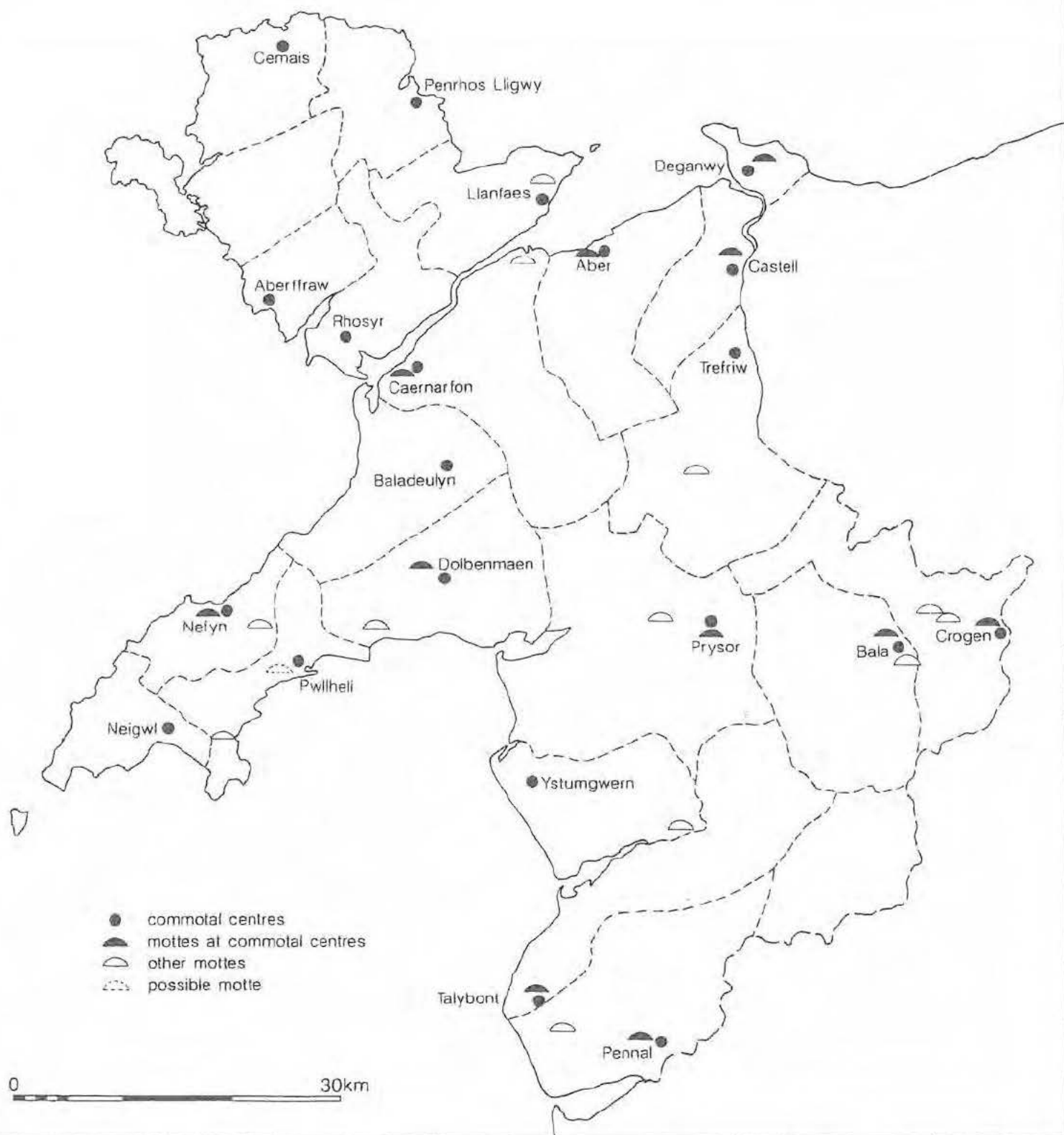


Fig. 1 Distribution of Llys locations in Gwynedd.



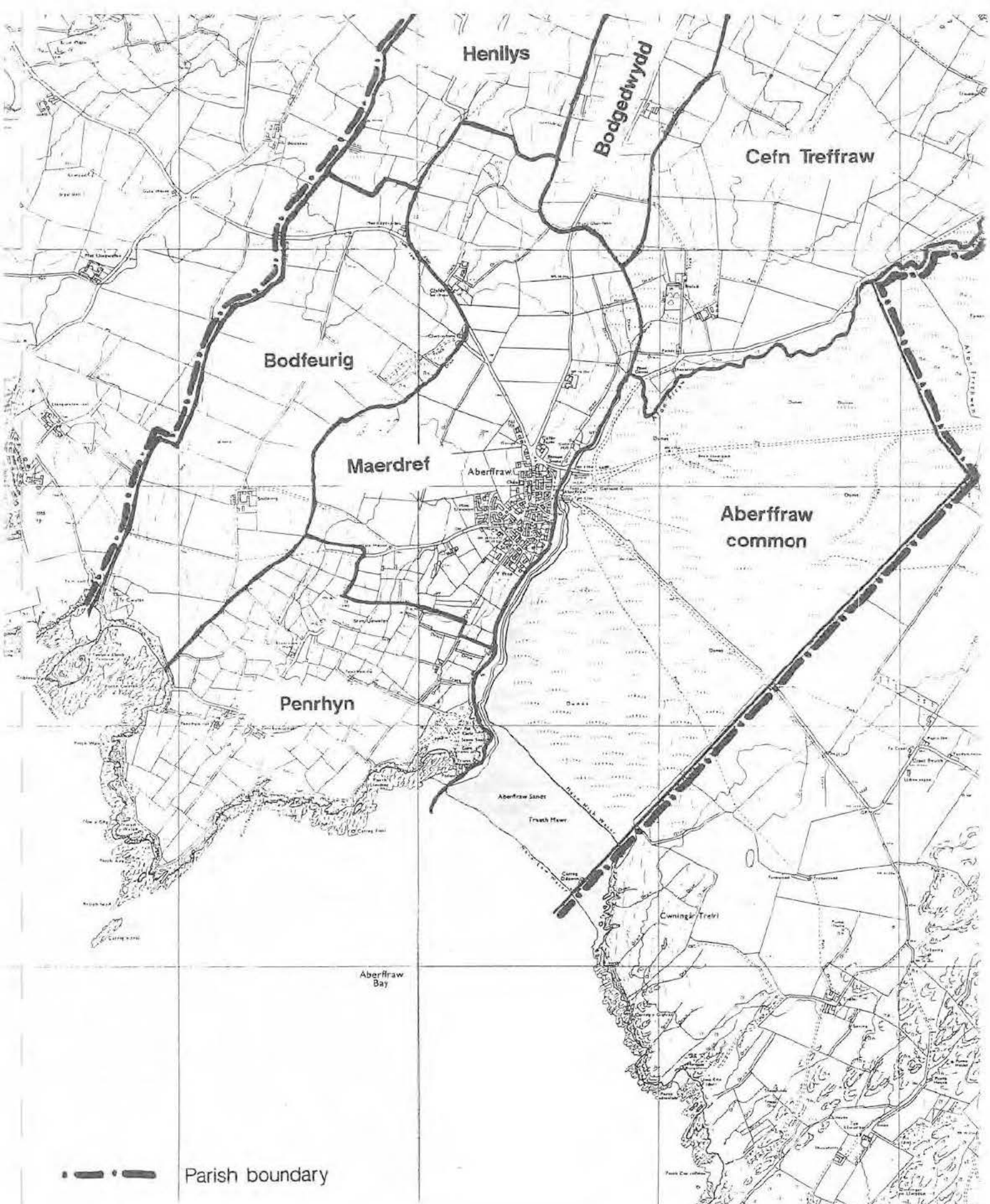
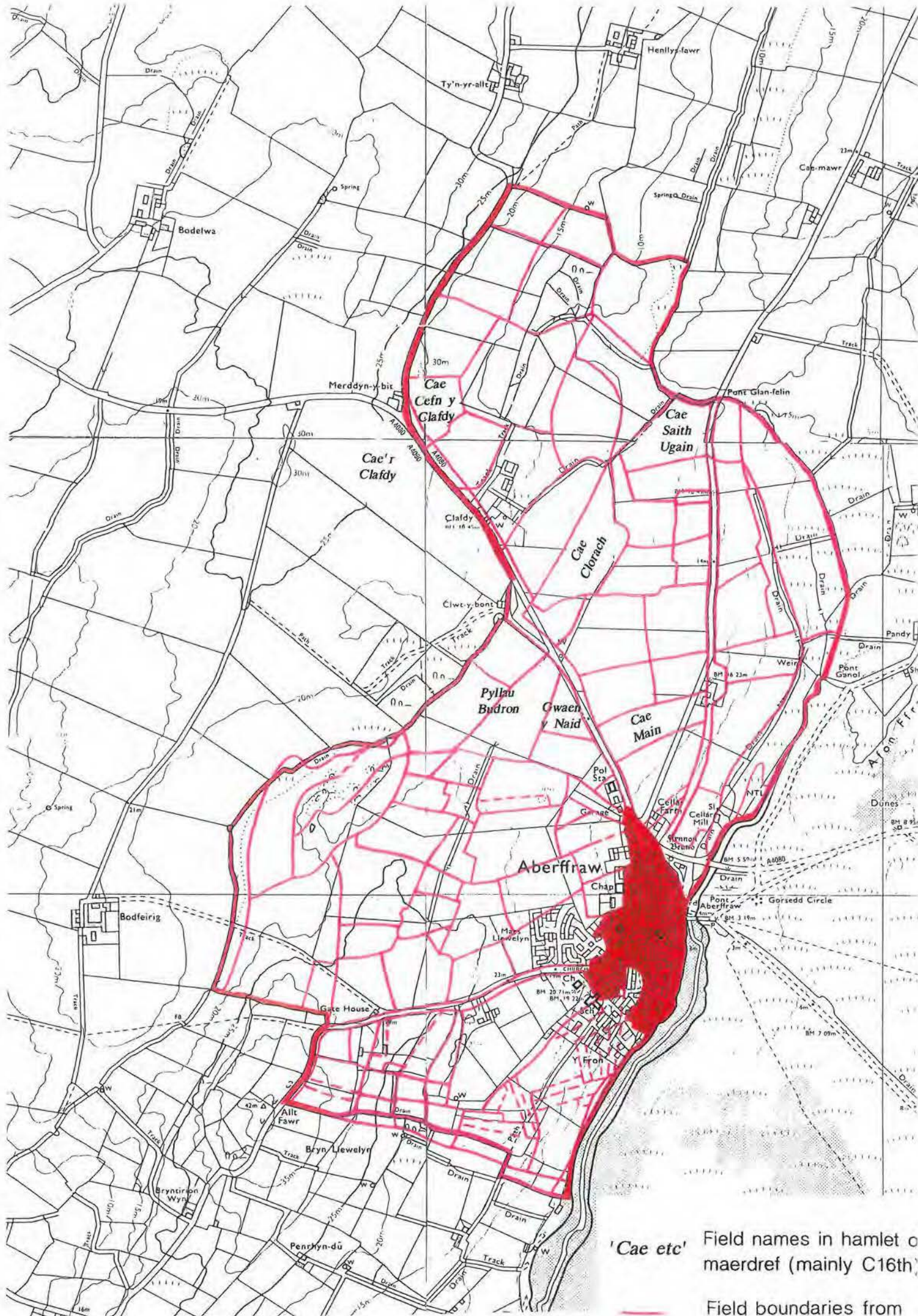


Fig. 3 Hamlets within the parish of Aberffraw.



'Cae etc' Field names in hamlet or maerdref (mainly C16th)

Field boundaries from 1845

Fig. 4 Aberffraw

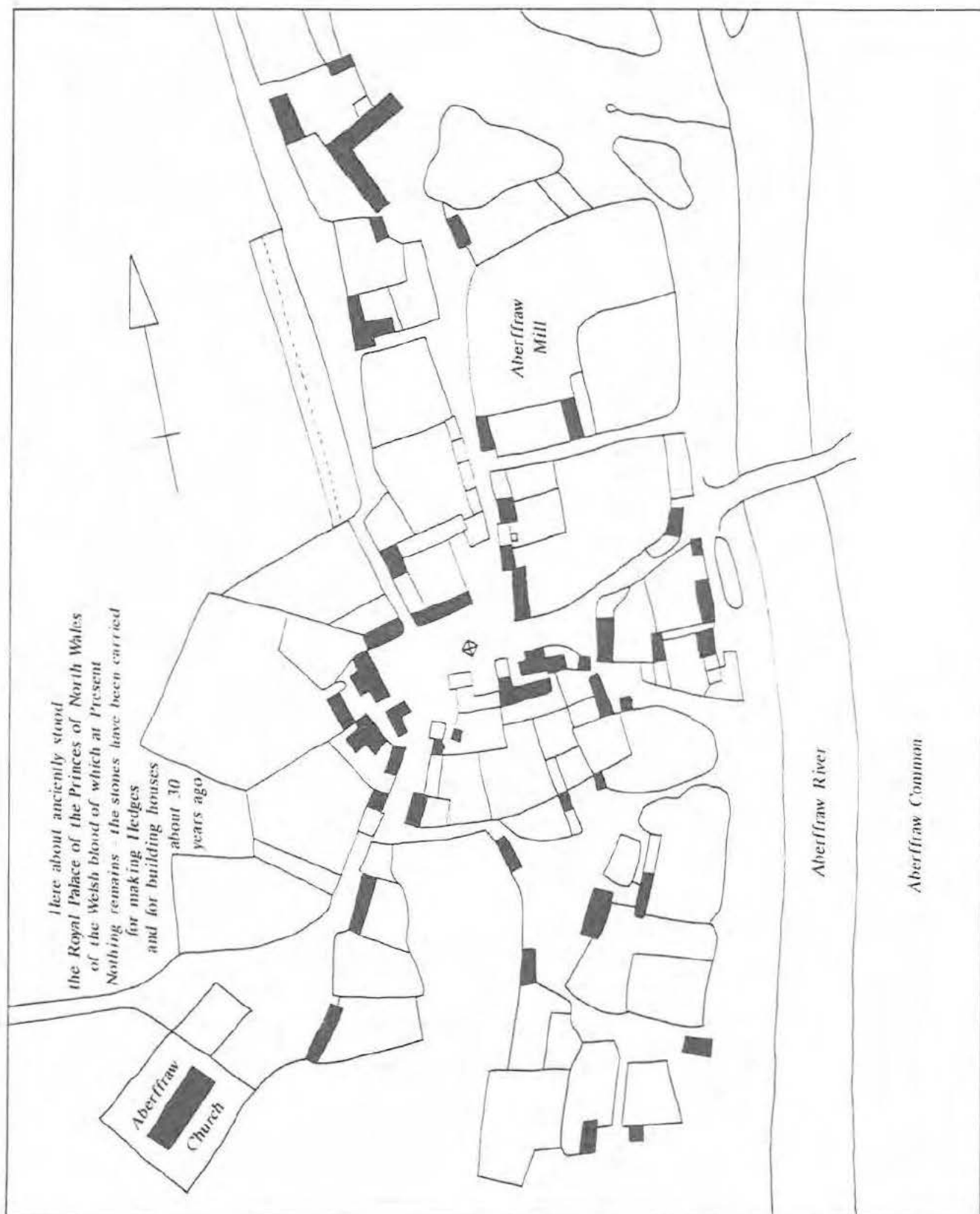


Fig. 5 C18th estate map - Aberffraw village.

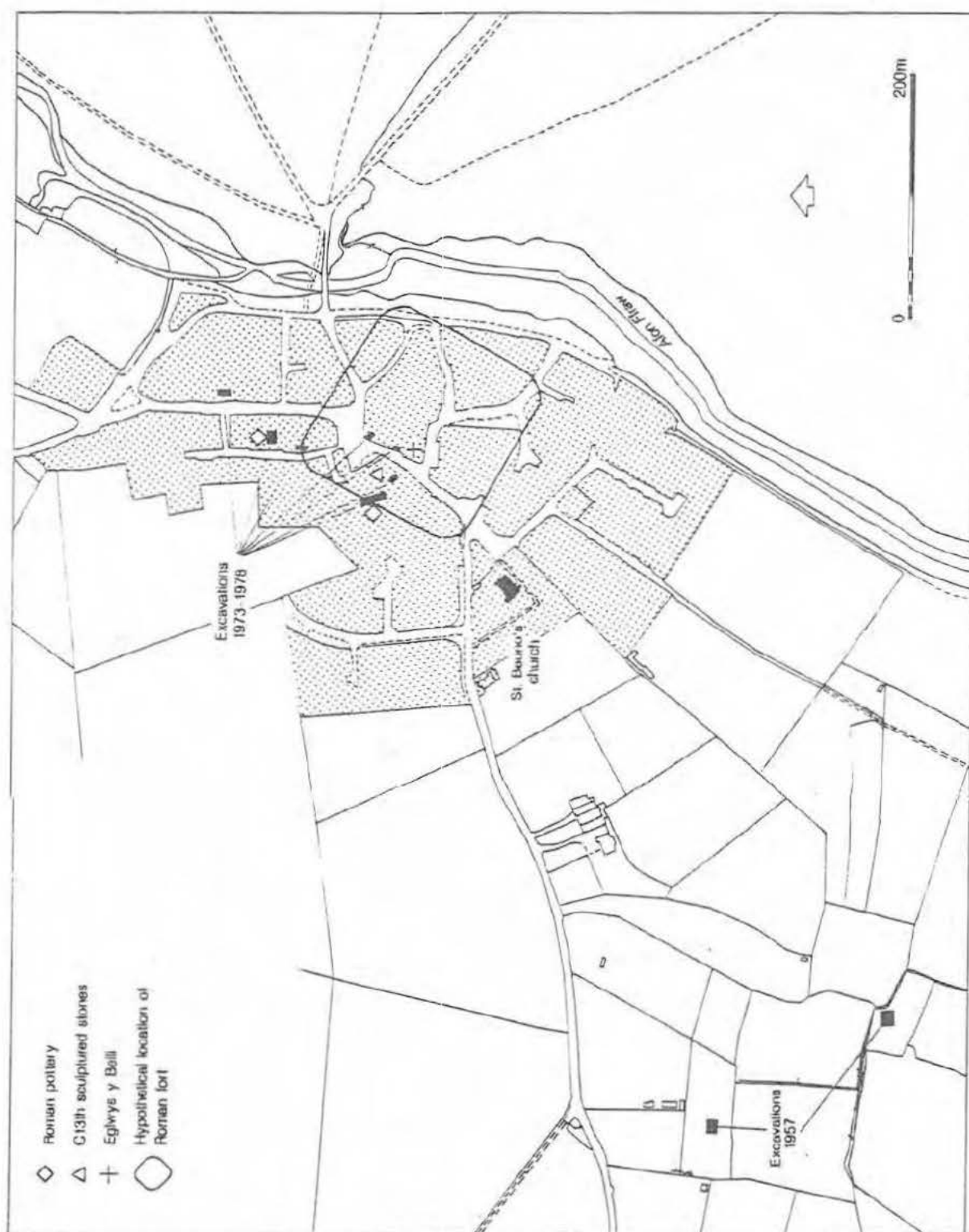


Fig. 6 Location map of excavations,
& sculptured stone found at Aberffraw.

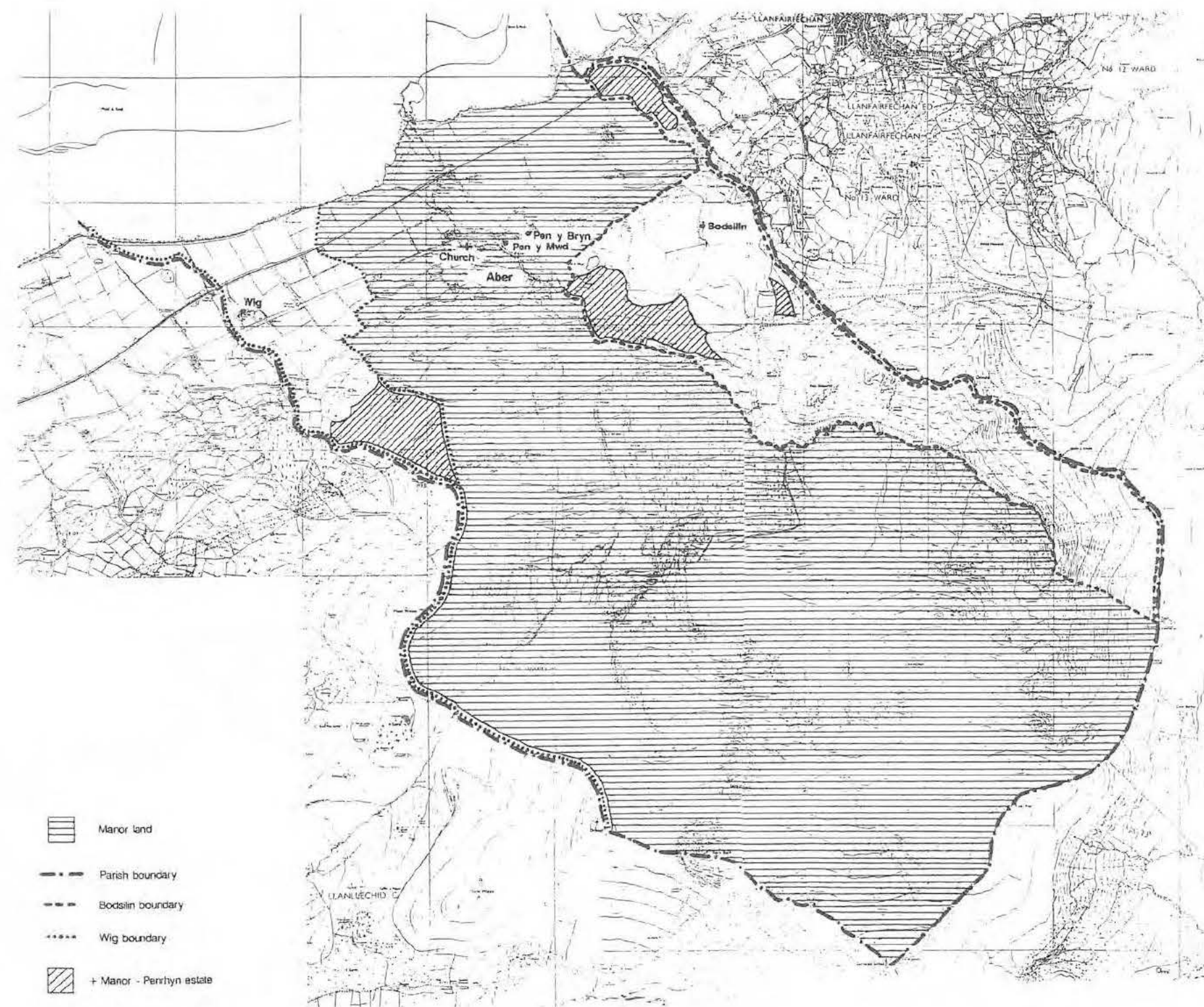
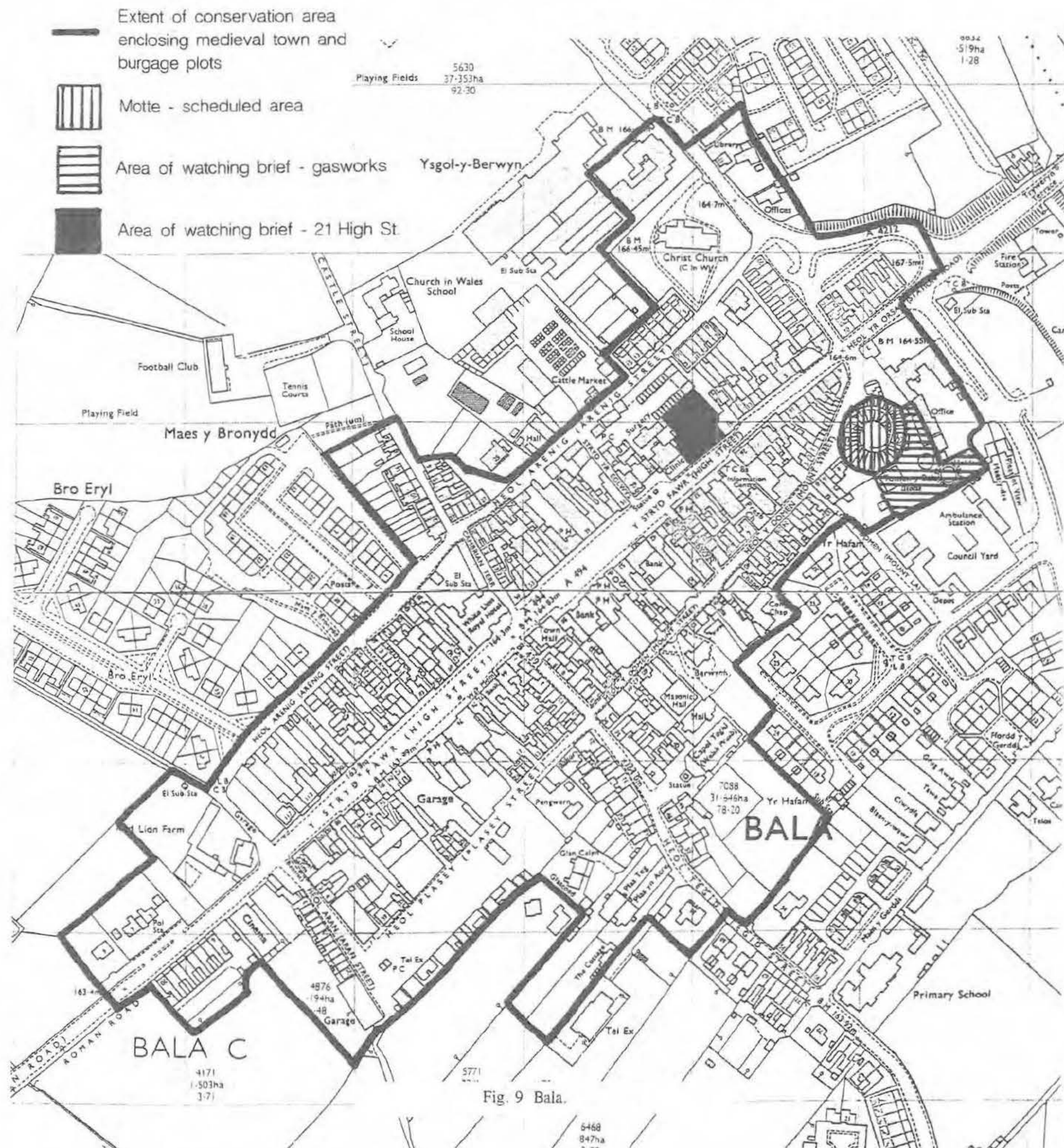


Fig. 7 Manor of Aber.



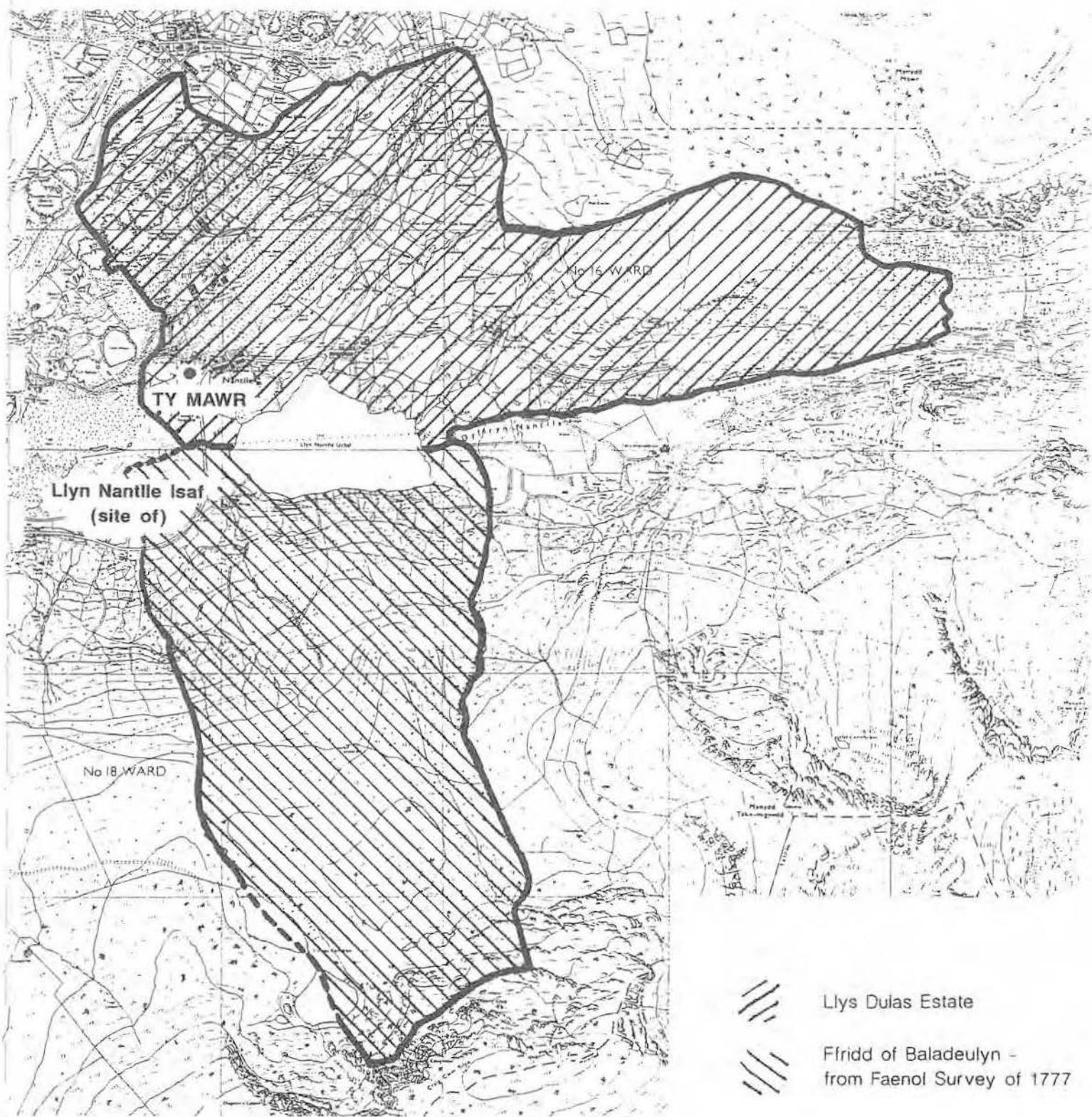


Fig. 11 Baladeulyn.

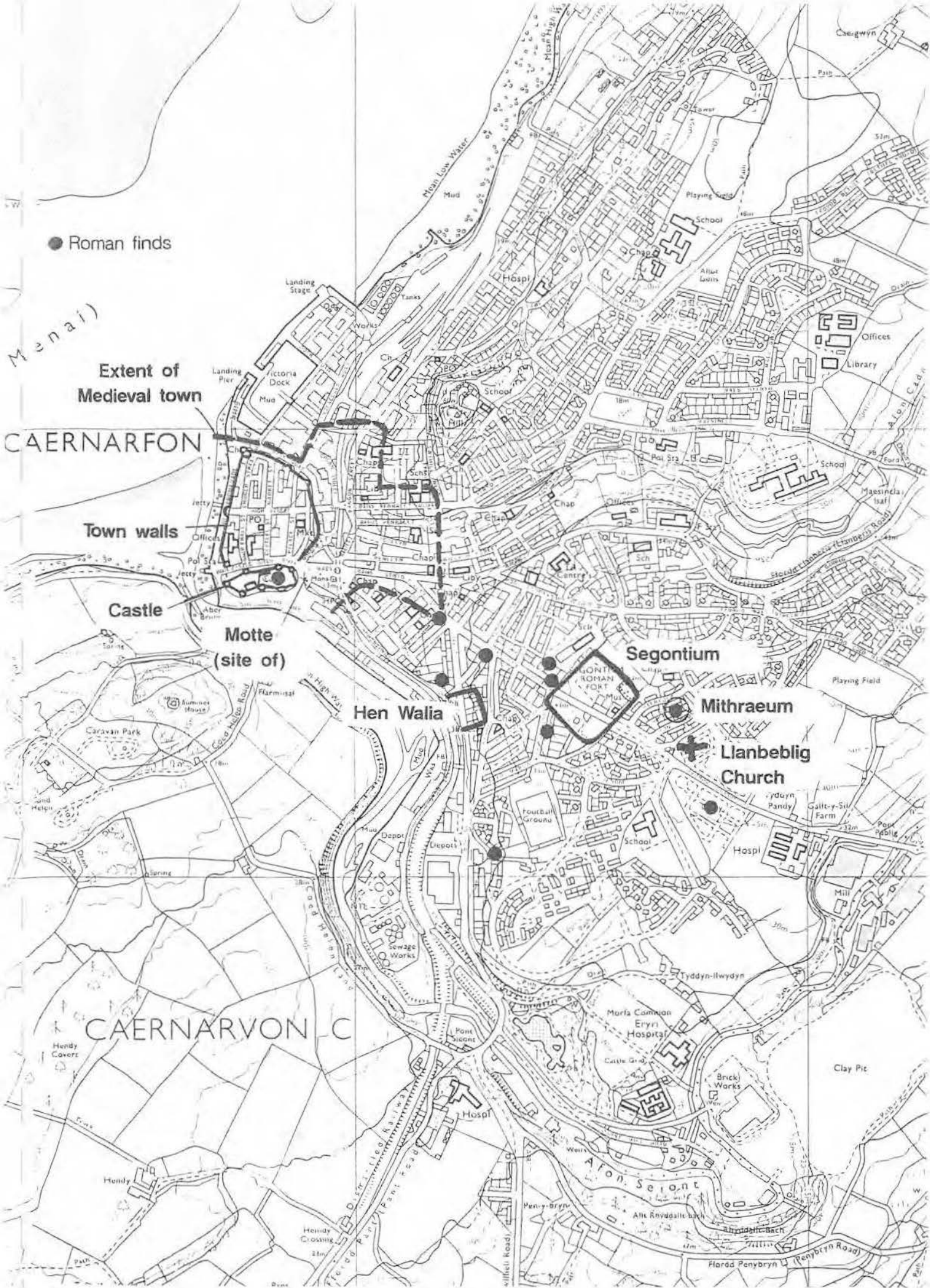


Fig. 12 Caernarfon.

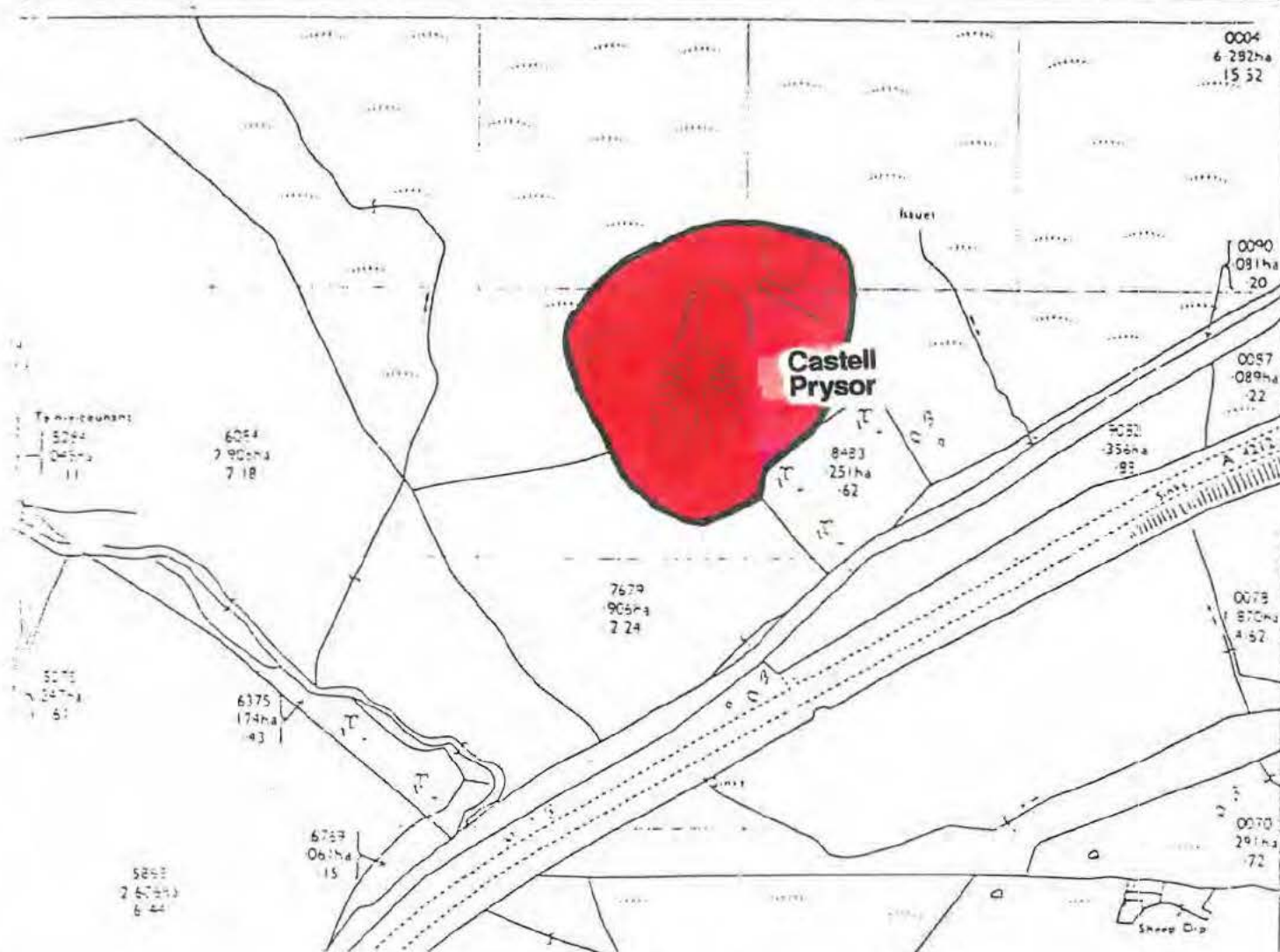
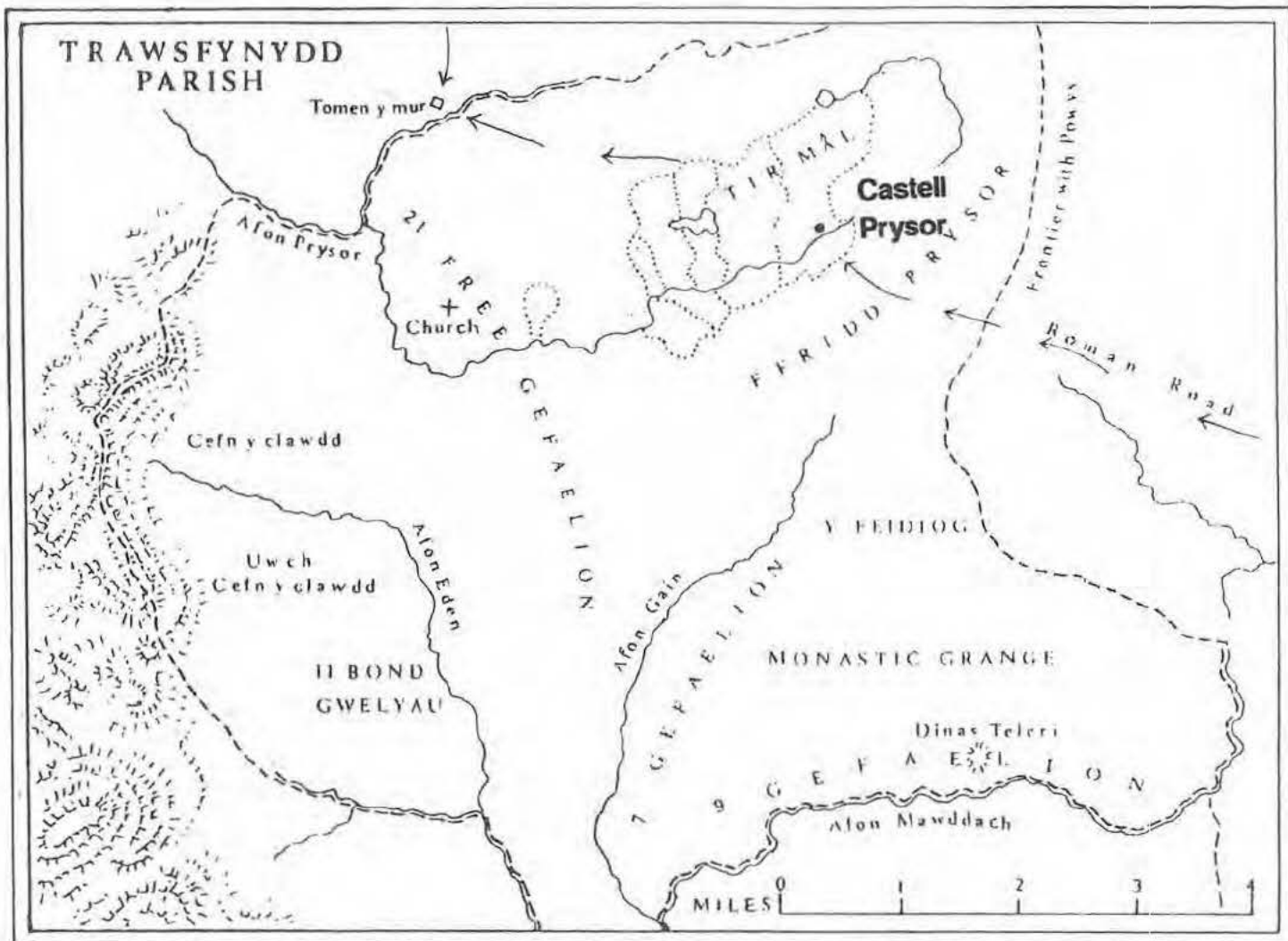


Fig. 13 Castell Prysor.

Parish boundary



Tregof hamlet



Cemaes township/manor



Clegyrog township



Properties originally part of
Coed Helen estate

Middle Mouss
(Ynys Badrig)

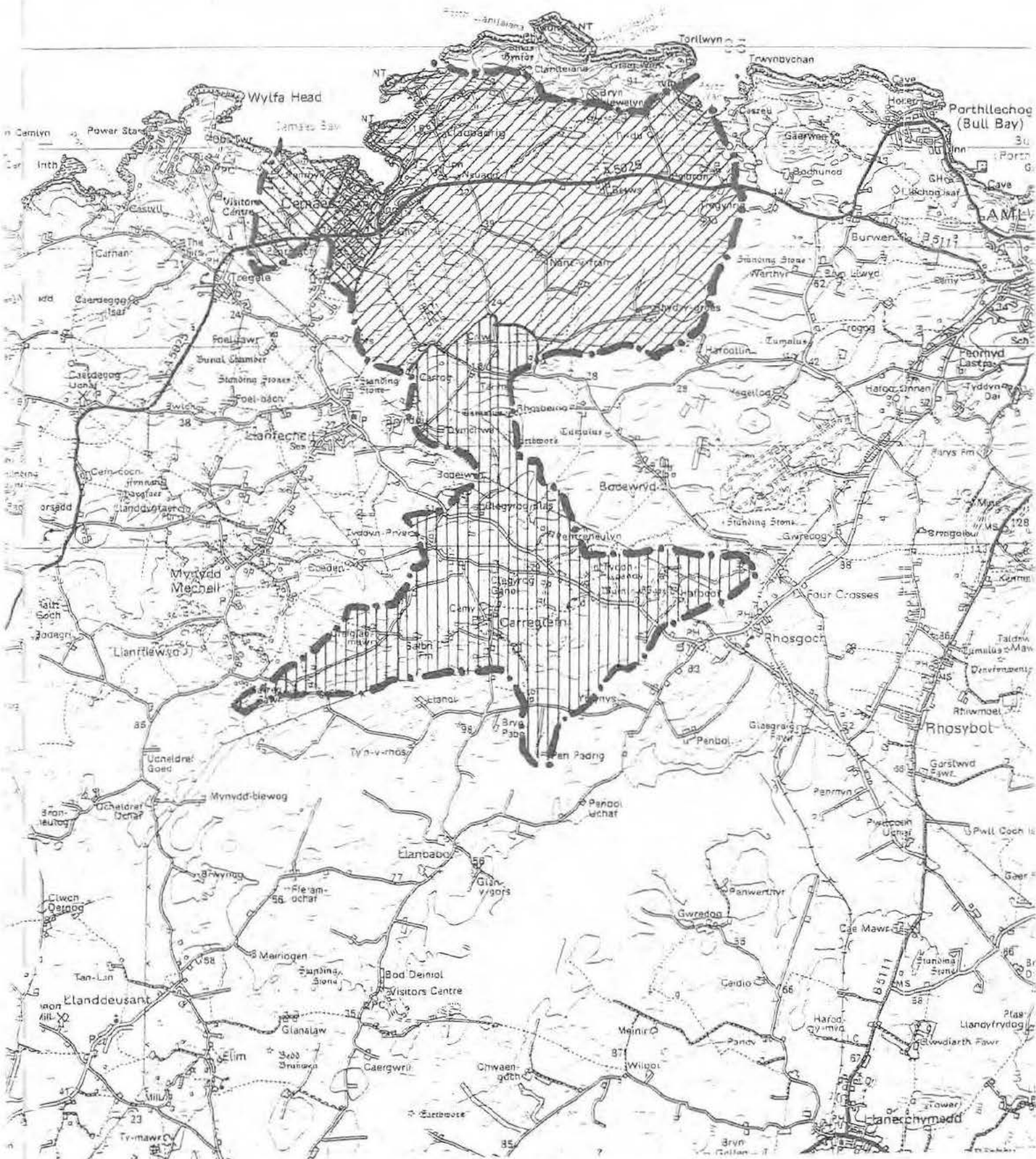


Fig. 14 Cemaes.

- Roman finds

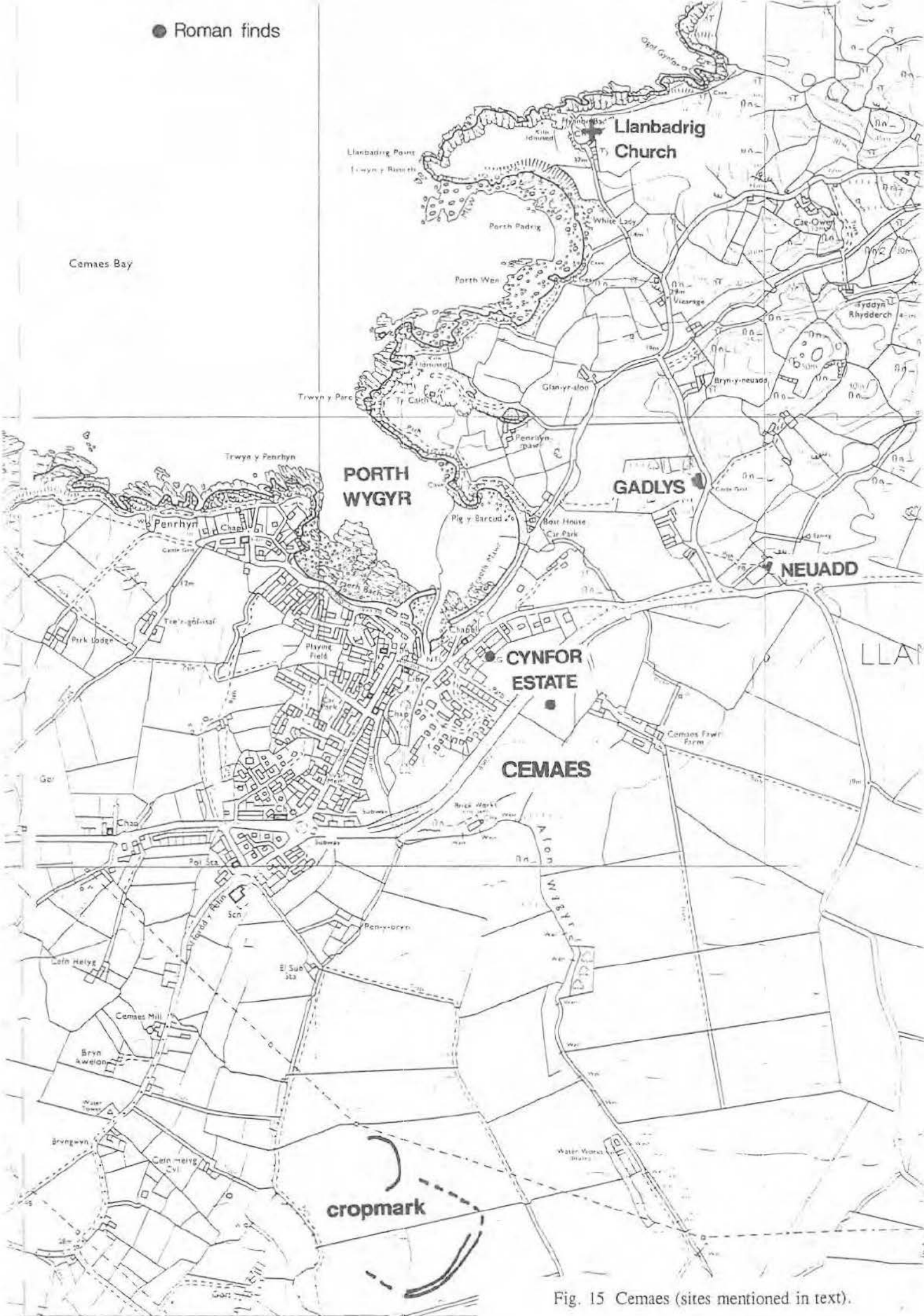
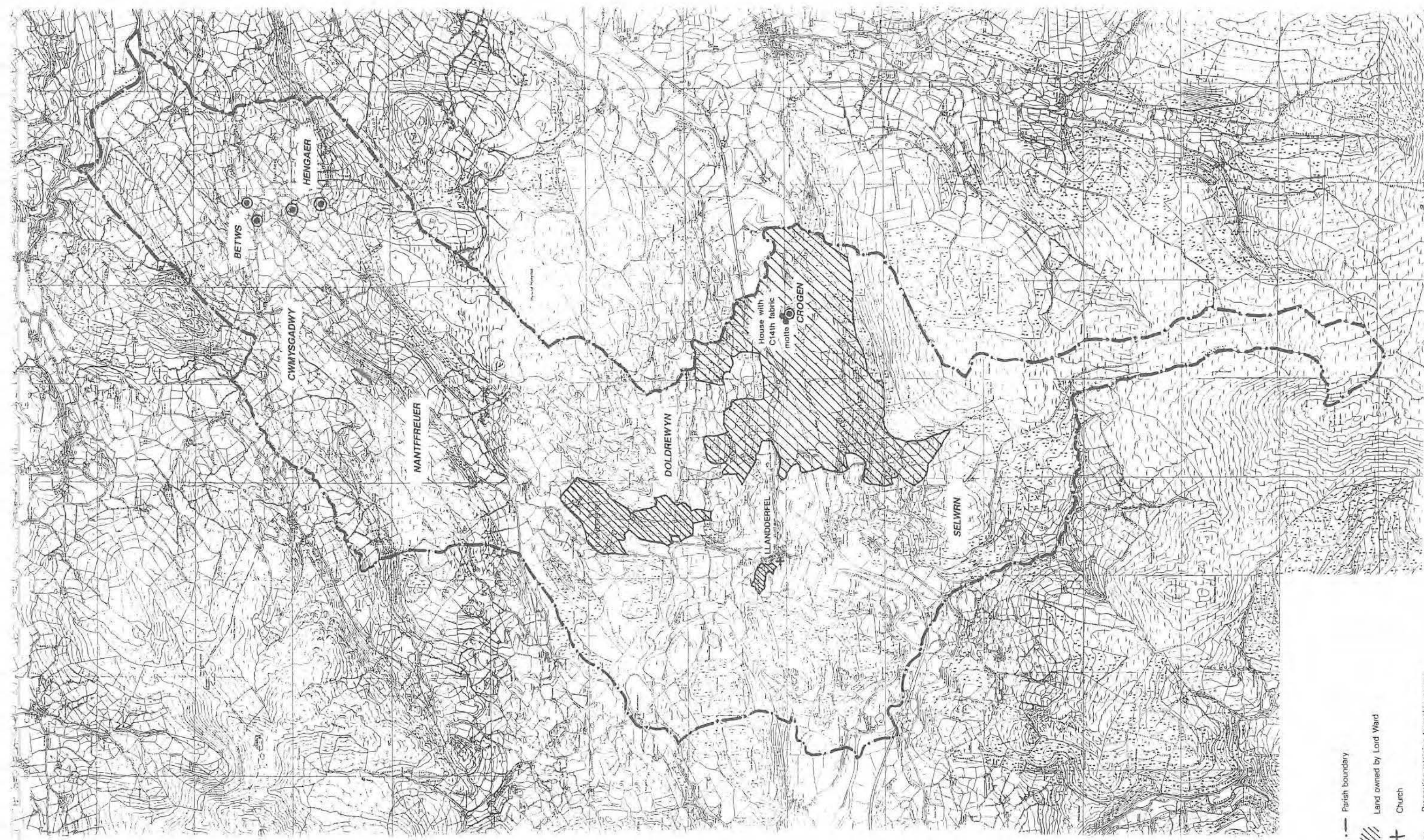


Fig. 15 Cemaes (sites mentioned in text).



--- Parish boundary

Land owned by Lord Ward

+ Church

● Properties relating township names
(township names in italics)

Fig. 16 Crogen.

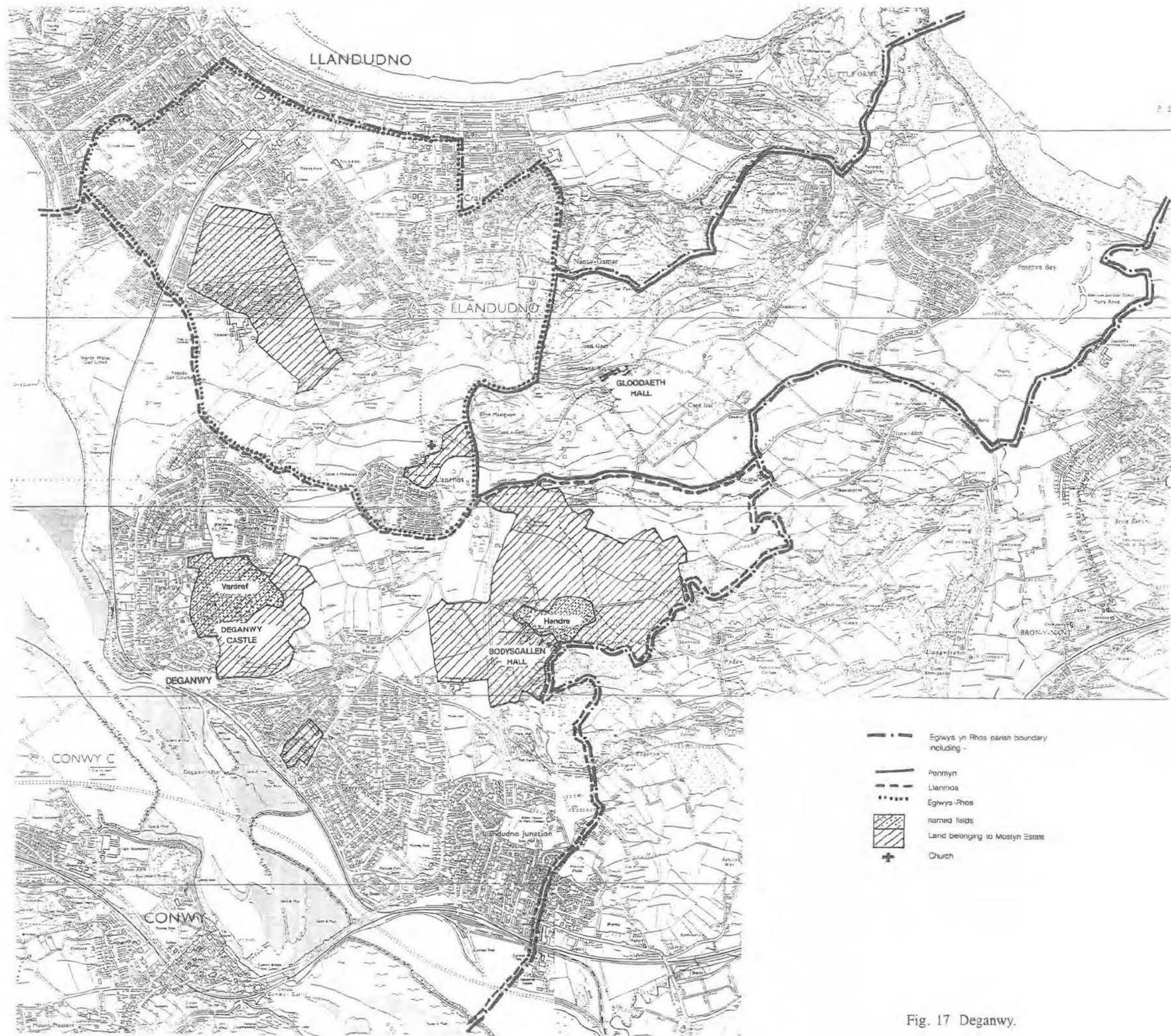
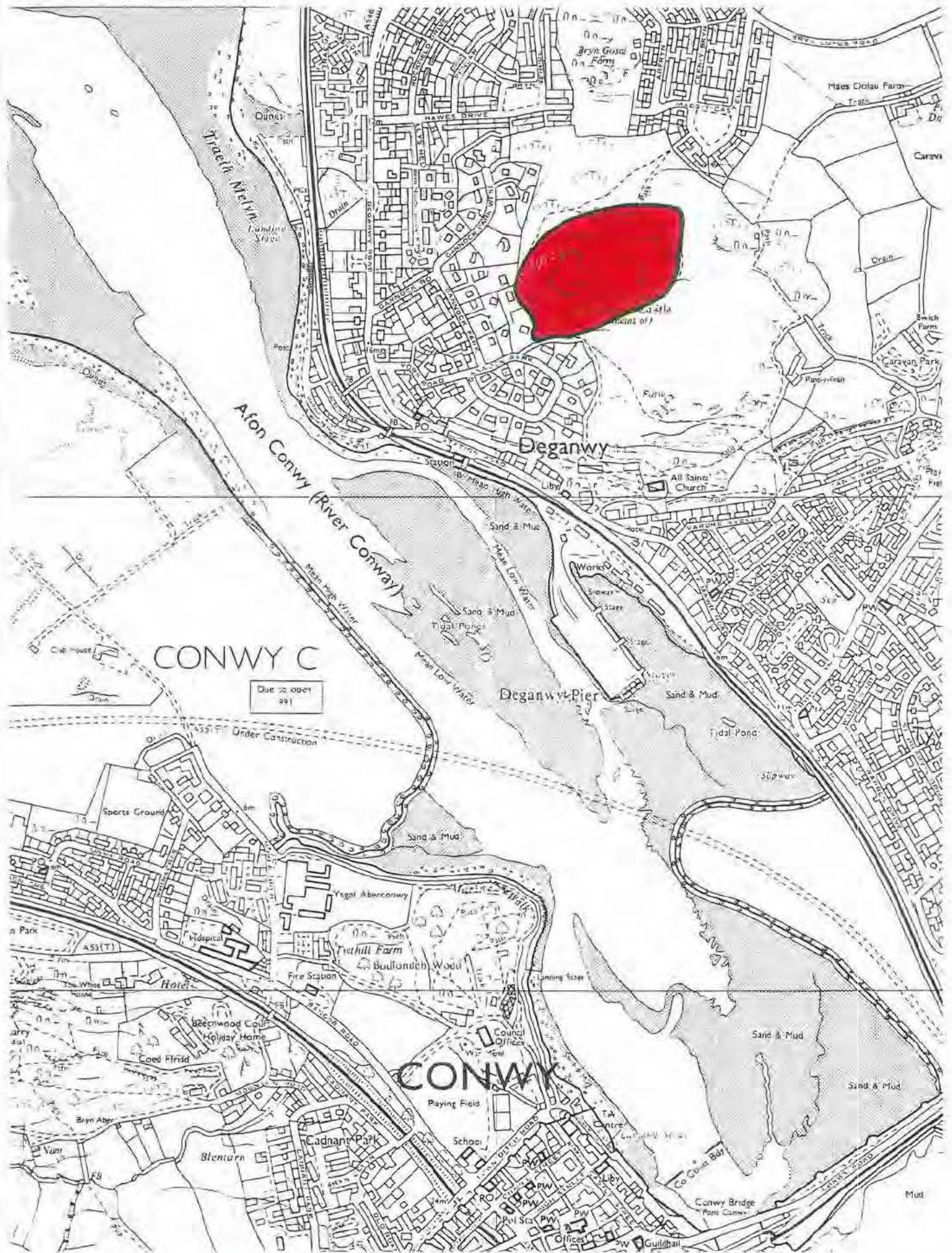


Fig. 17 Deganwy.






 extent of scheduled area

Fig. 18 Deganwy Castle.

- Township boundary
-  Demesne land
-  Motte

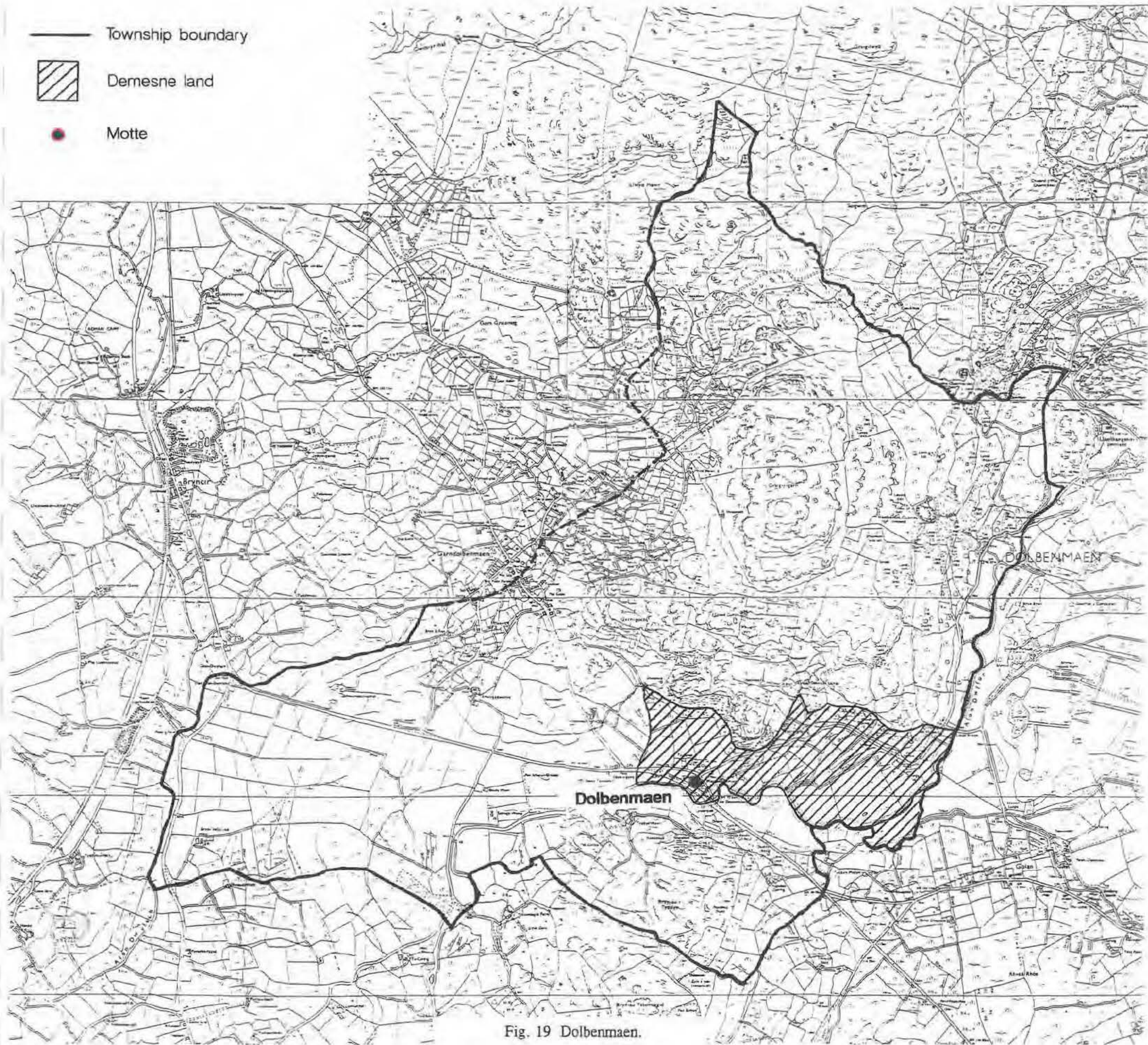


Fig. 19 Dolbenmaen.

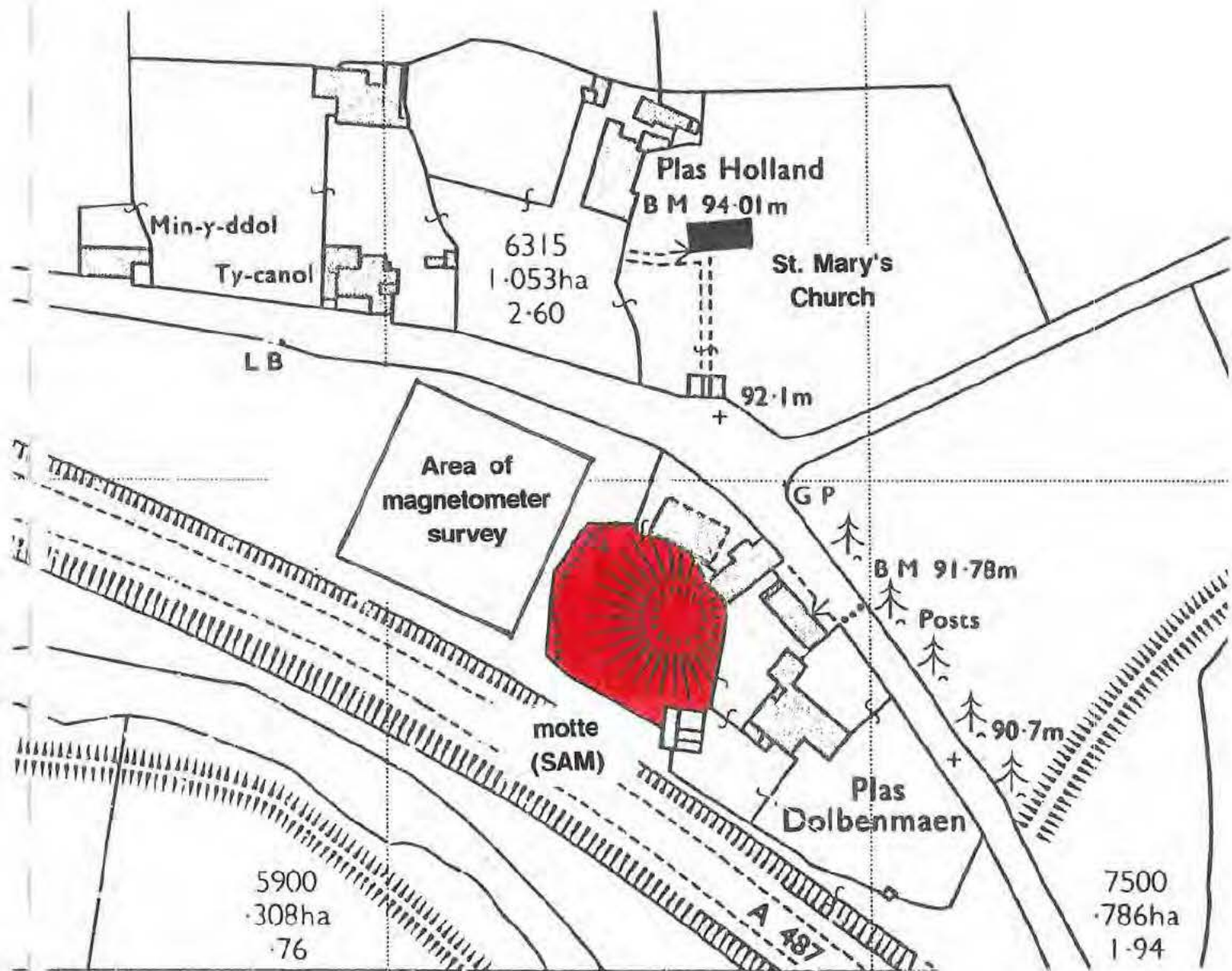
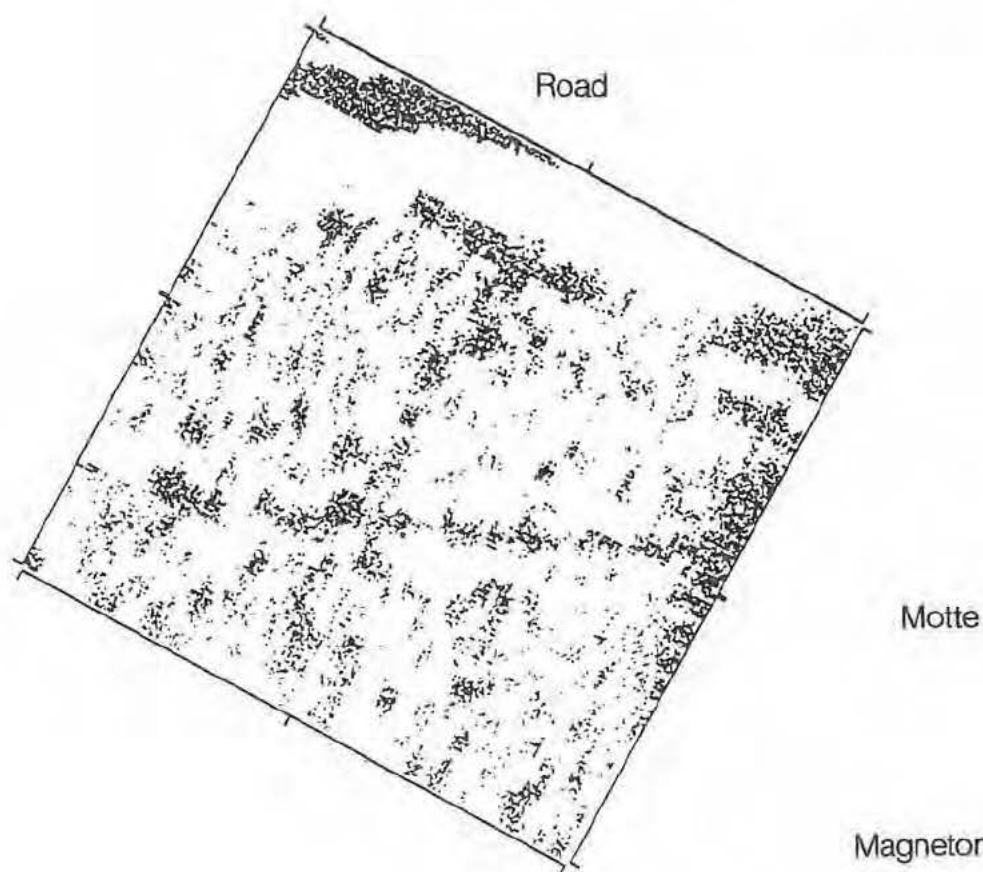


Fig. 20 Dolbenmaen - scheduled areas & geophysical survey.



Magnetometer survey - 1:500

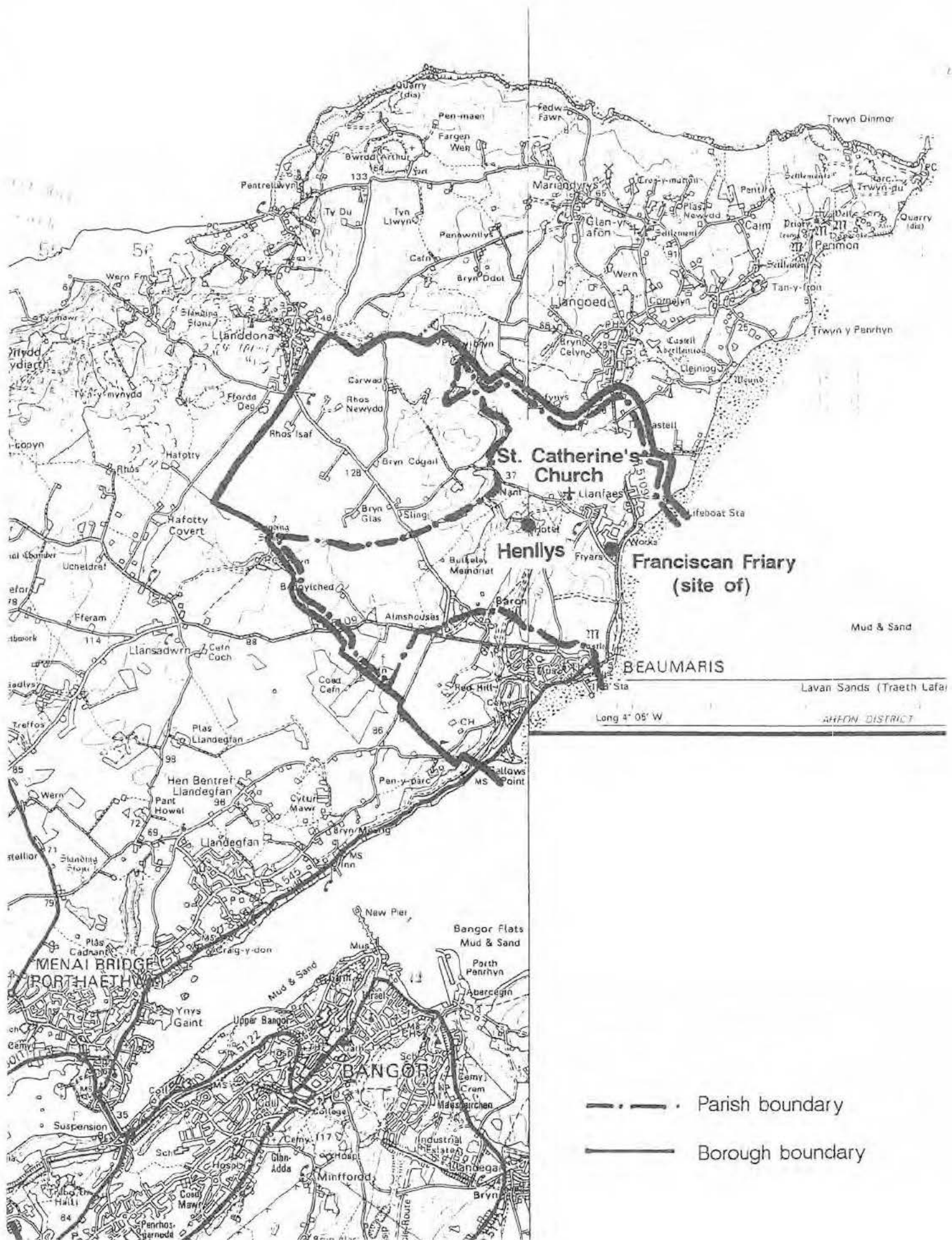


Fig. 21 Llanfaes.

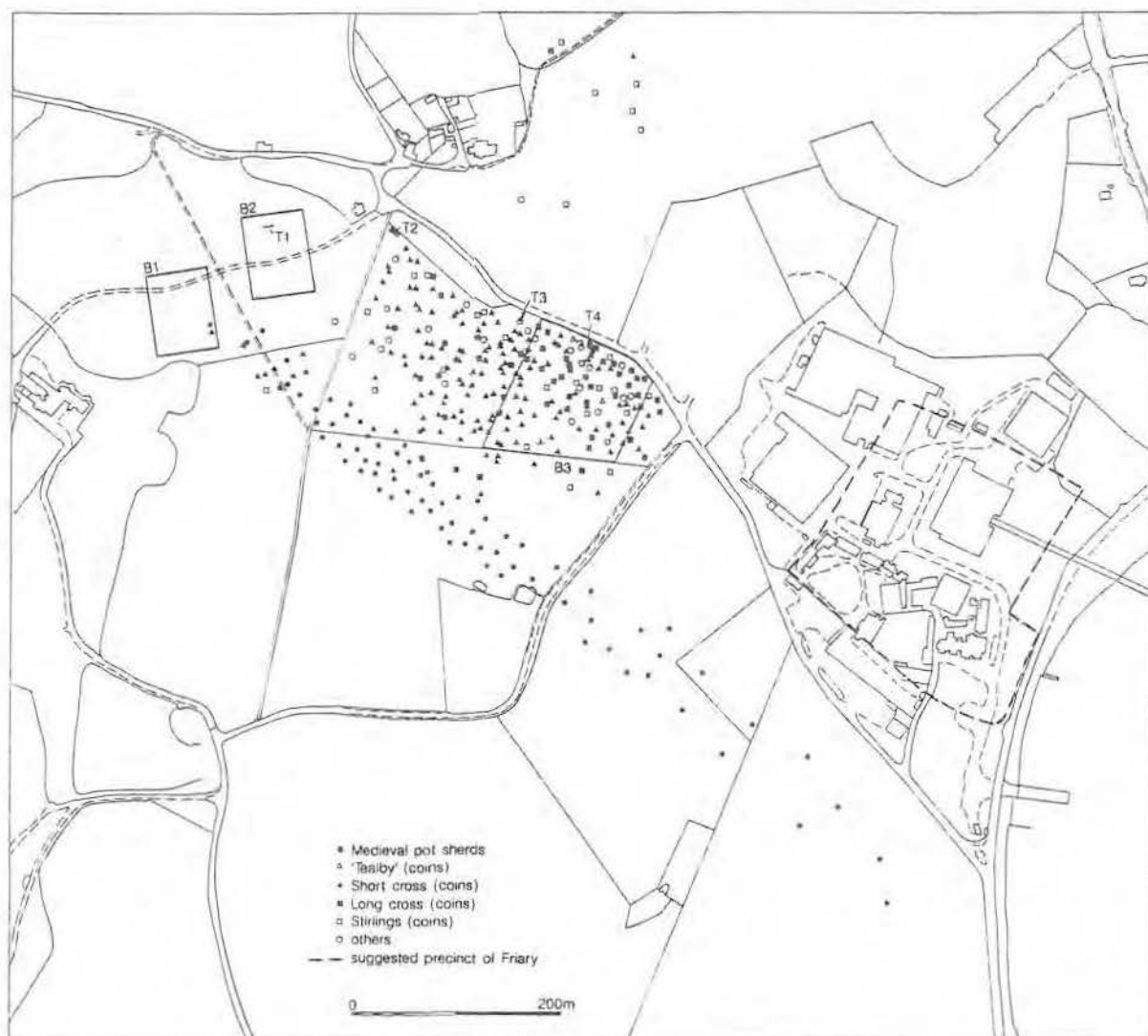
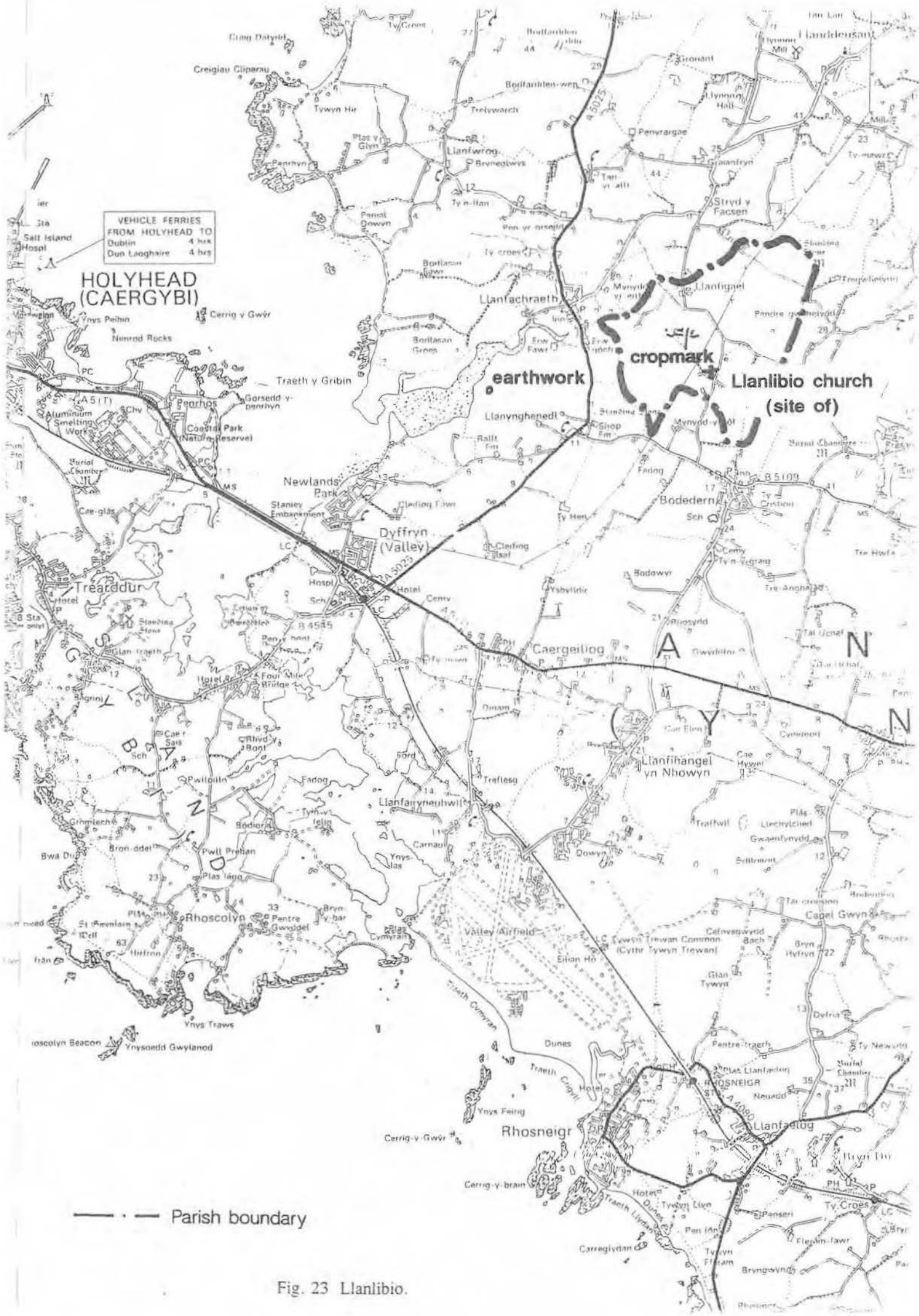
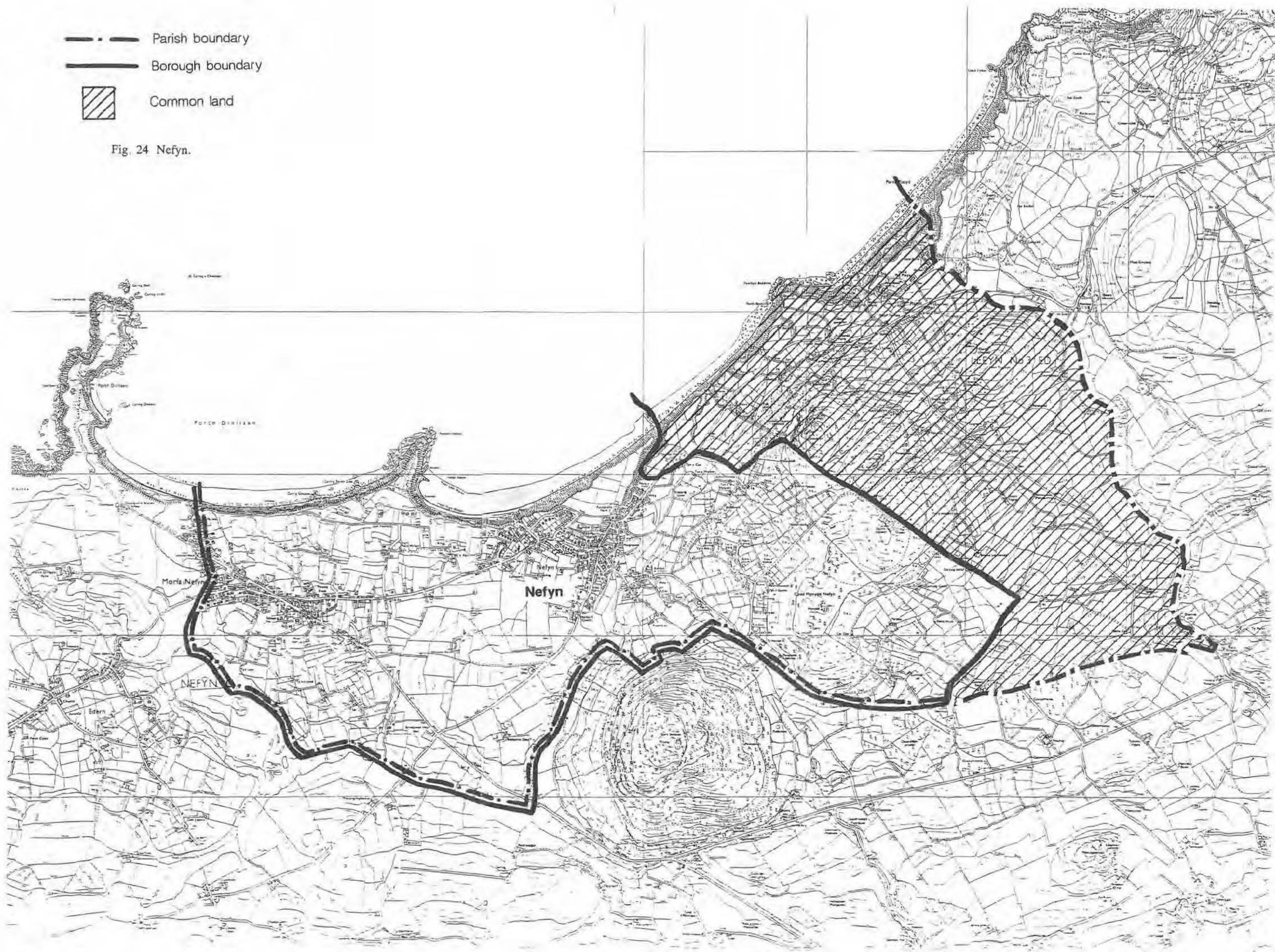


Fig. 22 Llanfaes - areas of geophysical survey (B1 + B2)
& finds distribution in vicinity.



- Parish boundary
- Borough boundary
- Common land

Fig. 24 Nefyn.



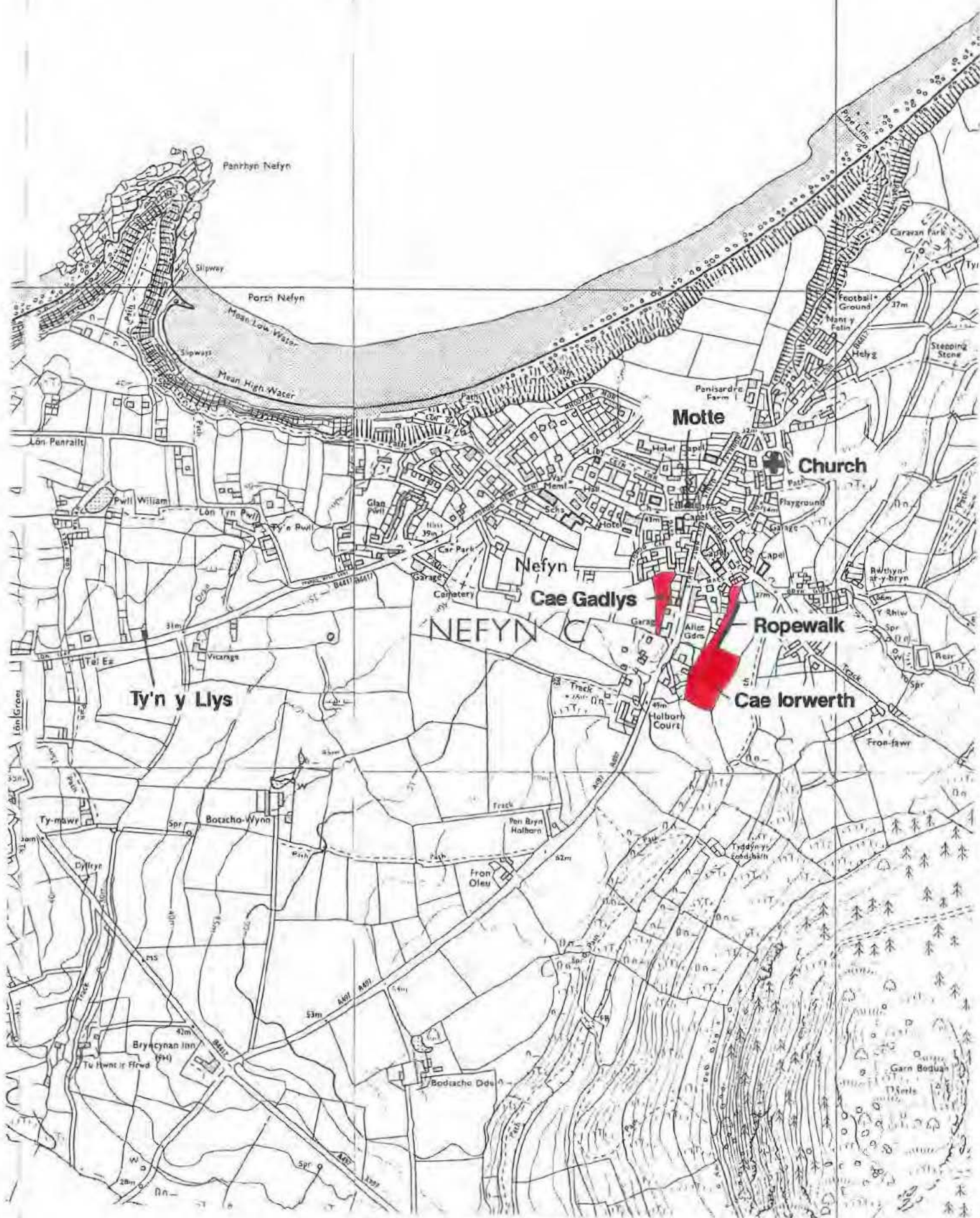


Fig. 25 Nefyn (sites mentioned in text).

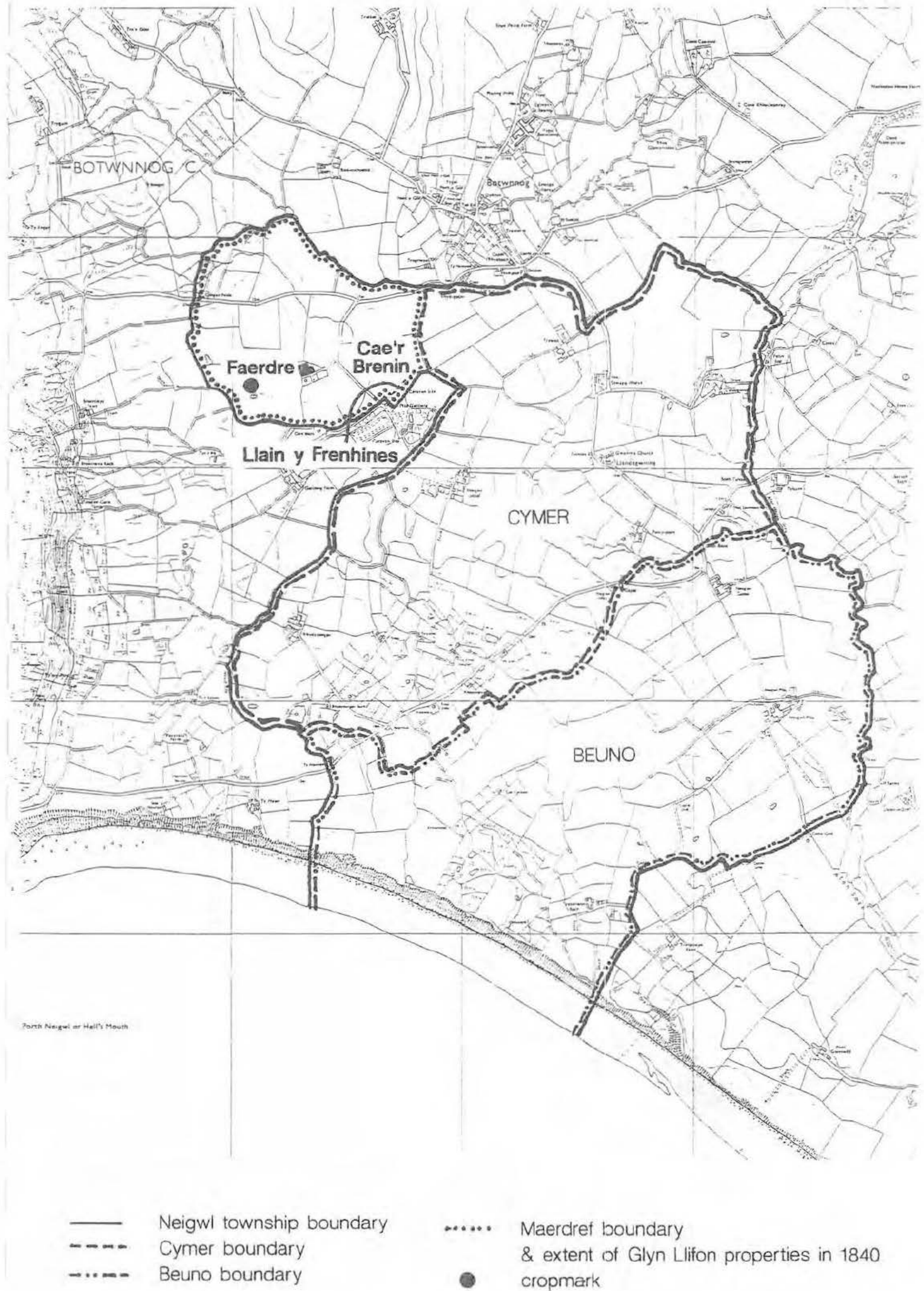


Fig. 26 Neigwl.

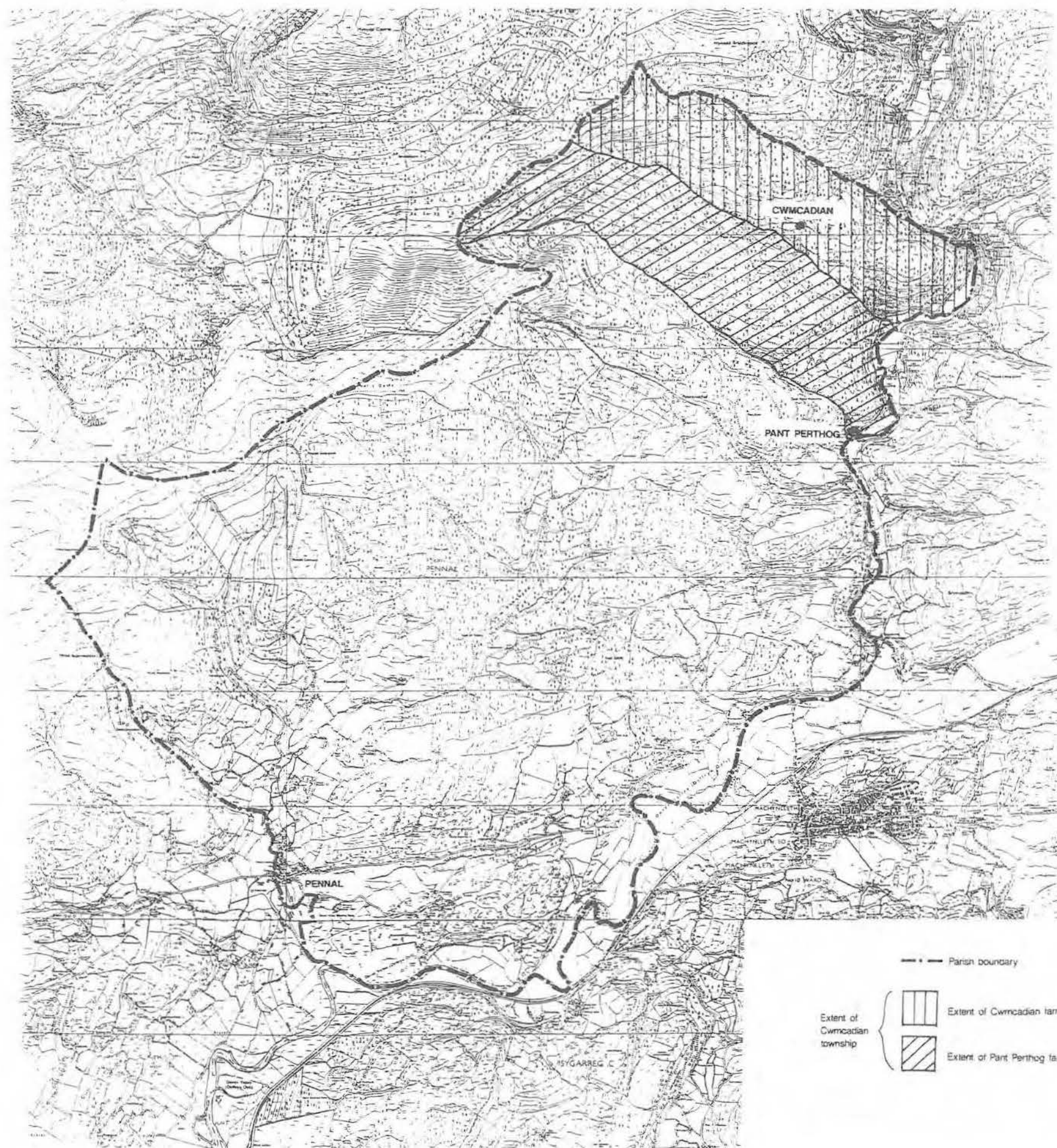


Fig. 27 Pennal.

Tower Ynys Dulas
Garreg Allar
Garnog

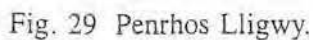


Fig. 29 Penrhos Lligwy.

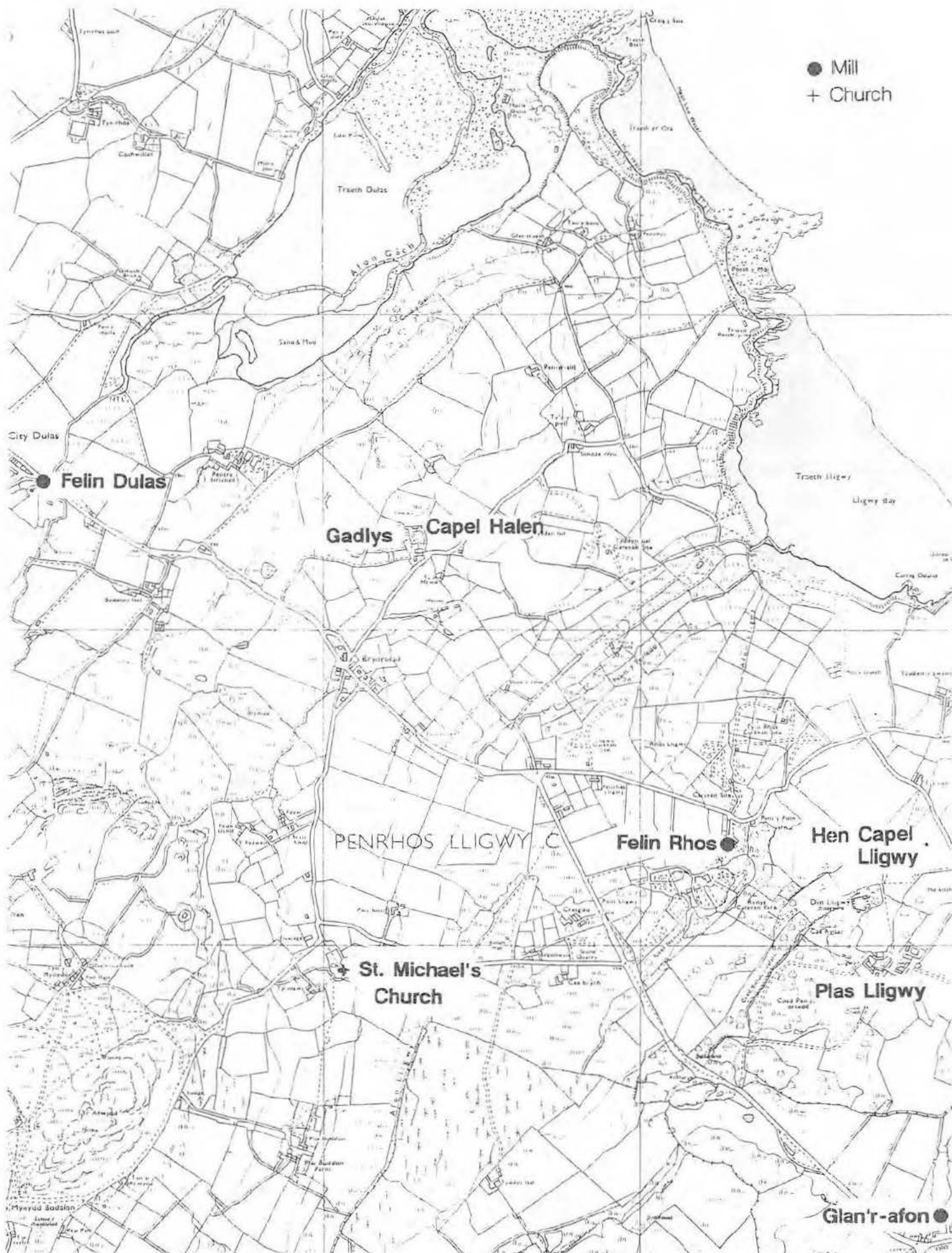


Fig. 30 Penrhos Lligwy (sites mentioned in text).

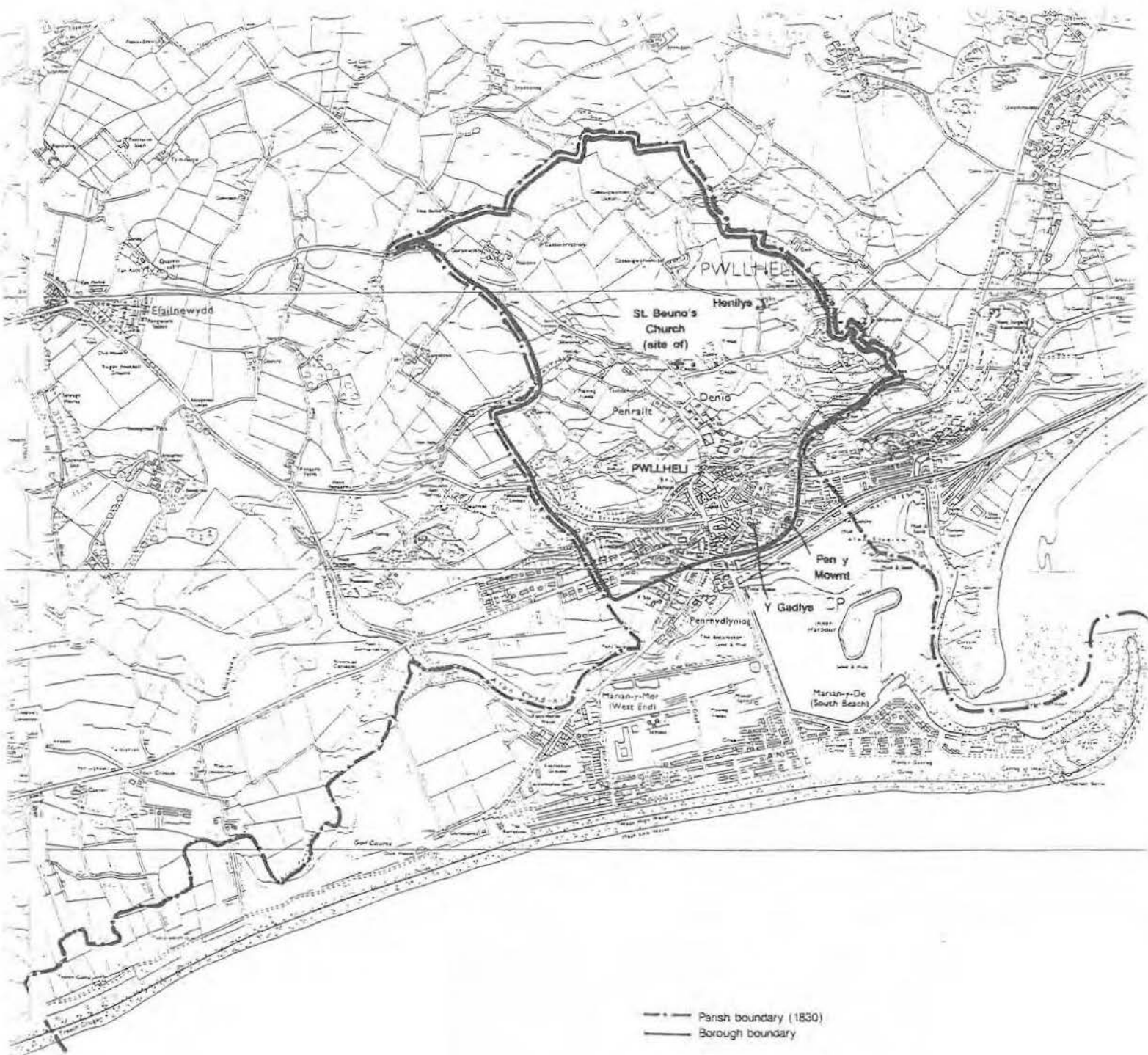


Fig. 31 Pwllheli.

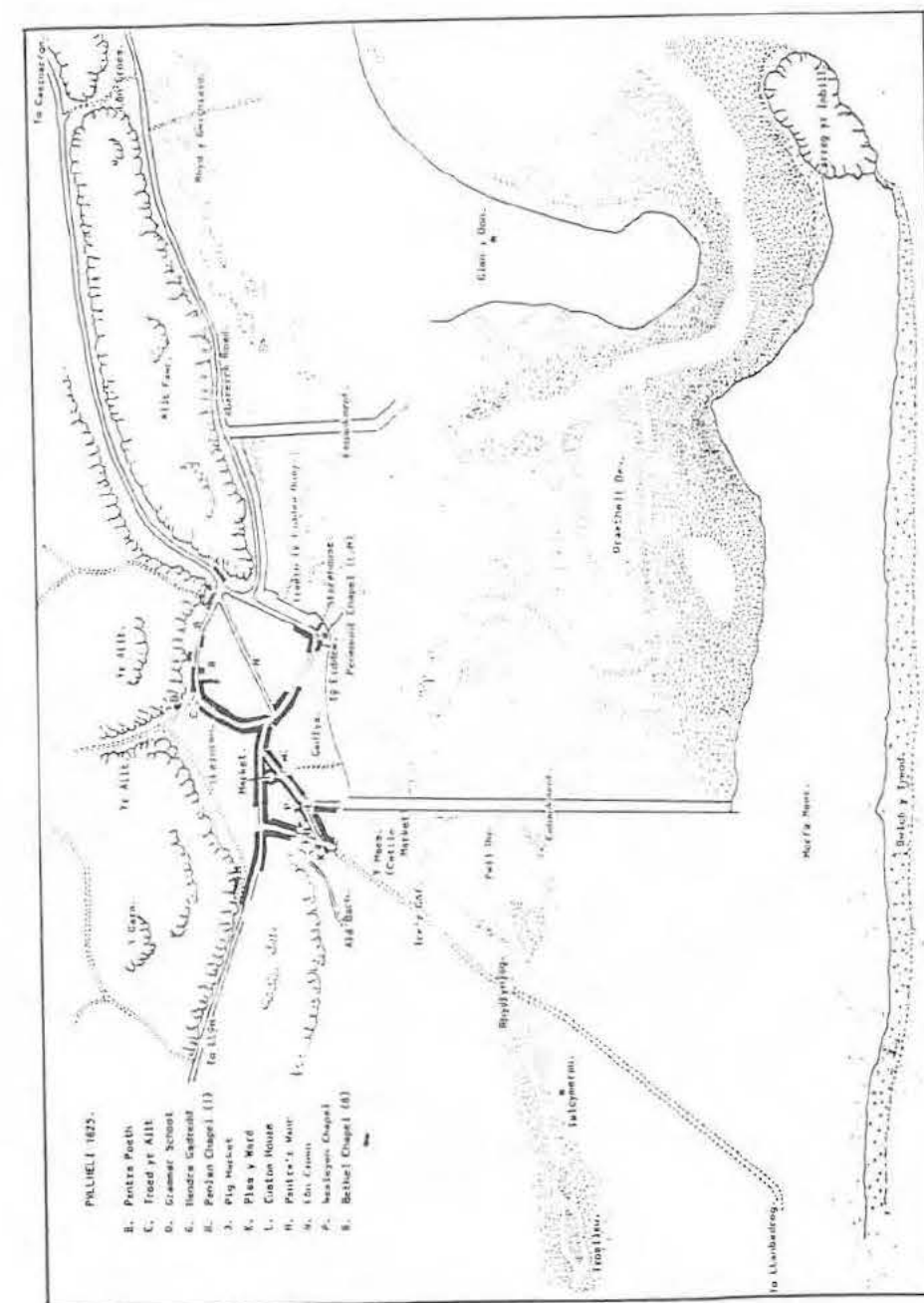
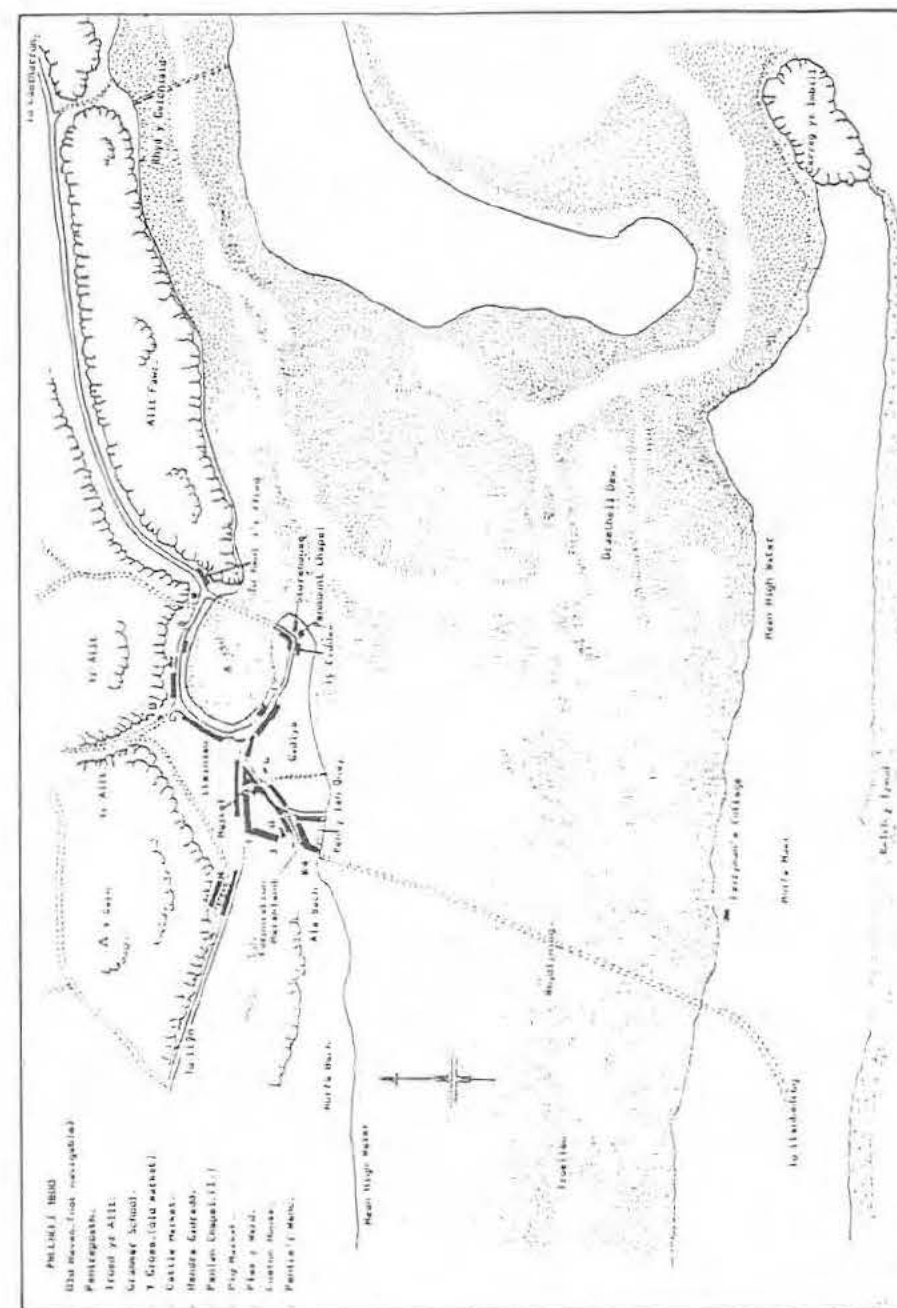
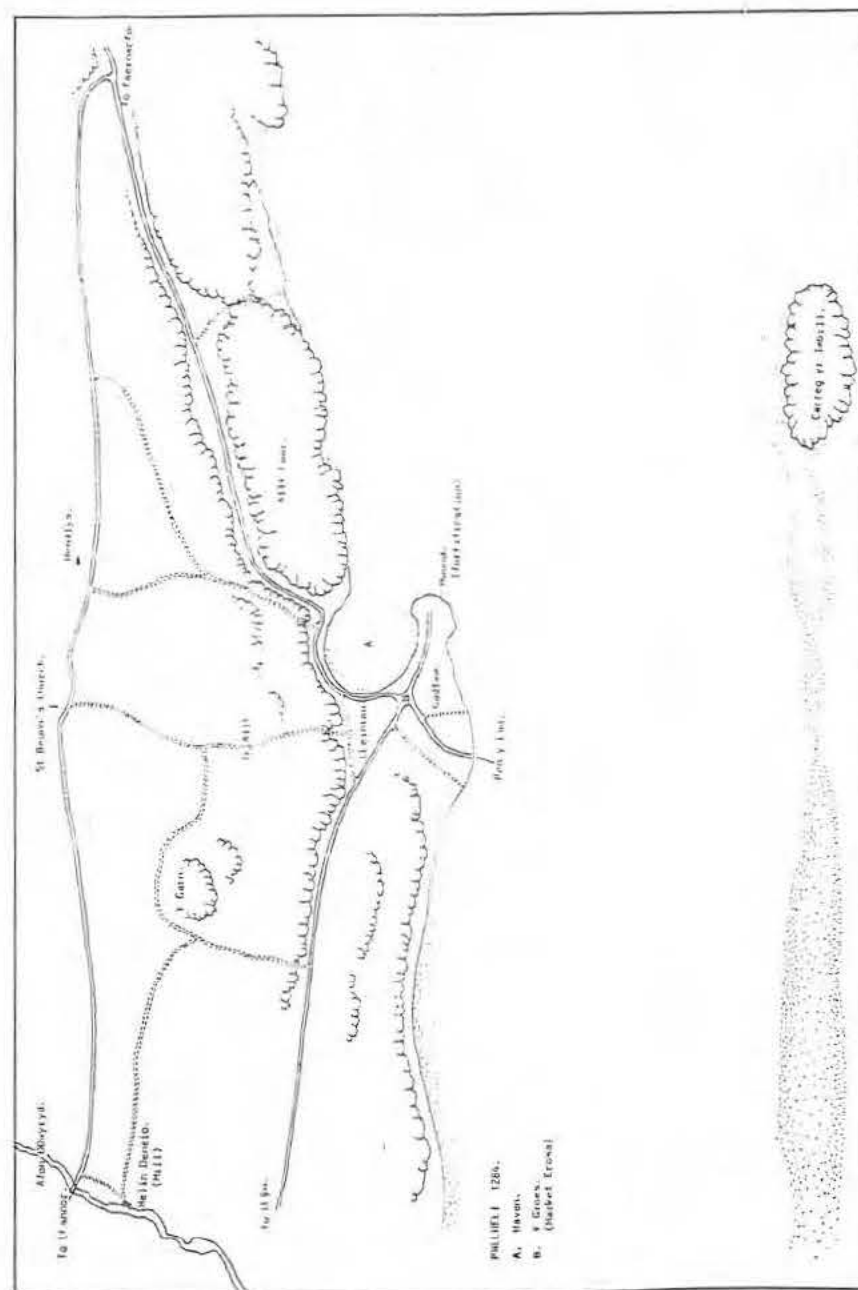
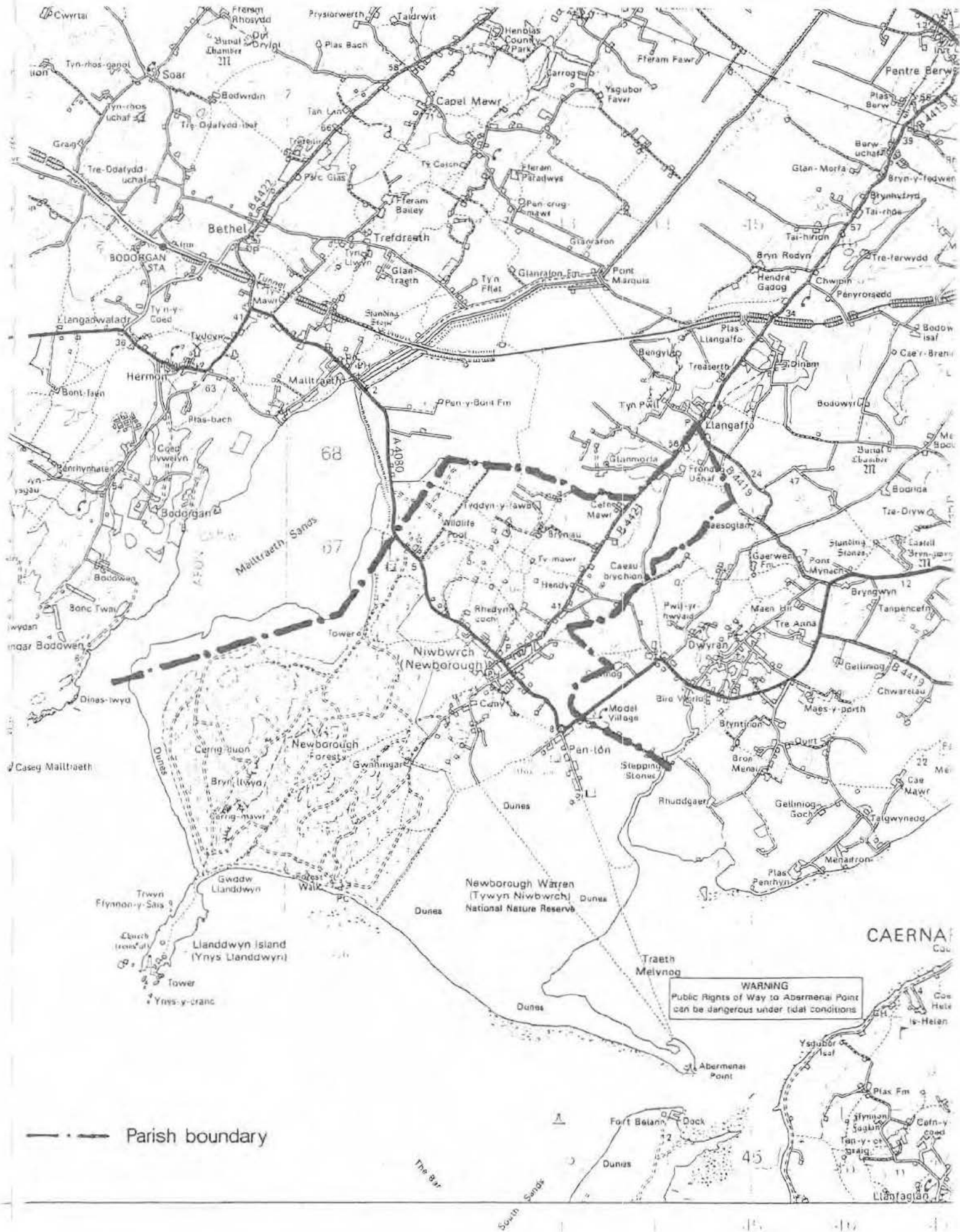


Fig. 32 Pwllheli - topographical development of town.



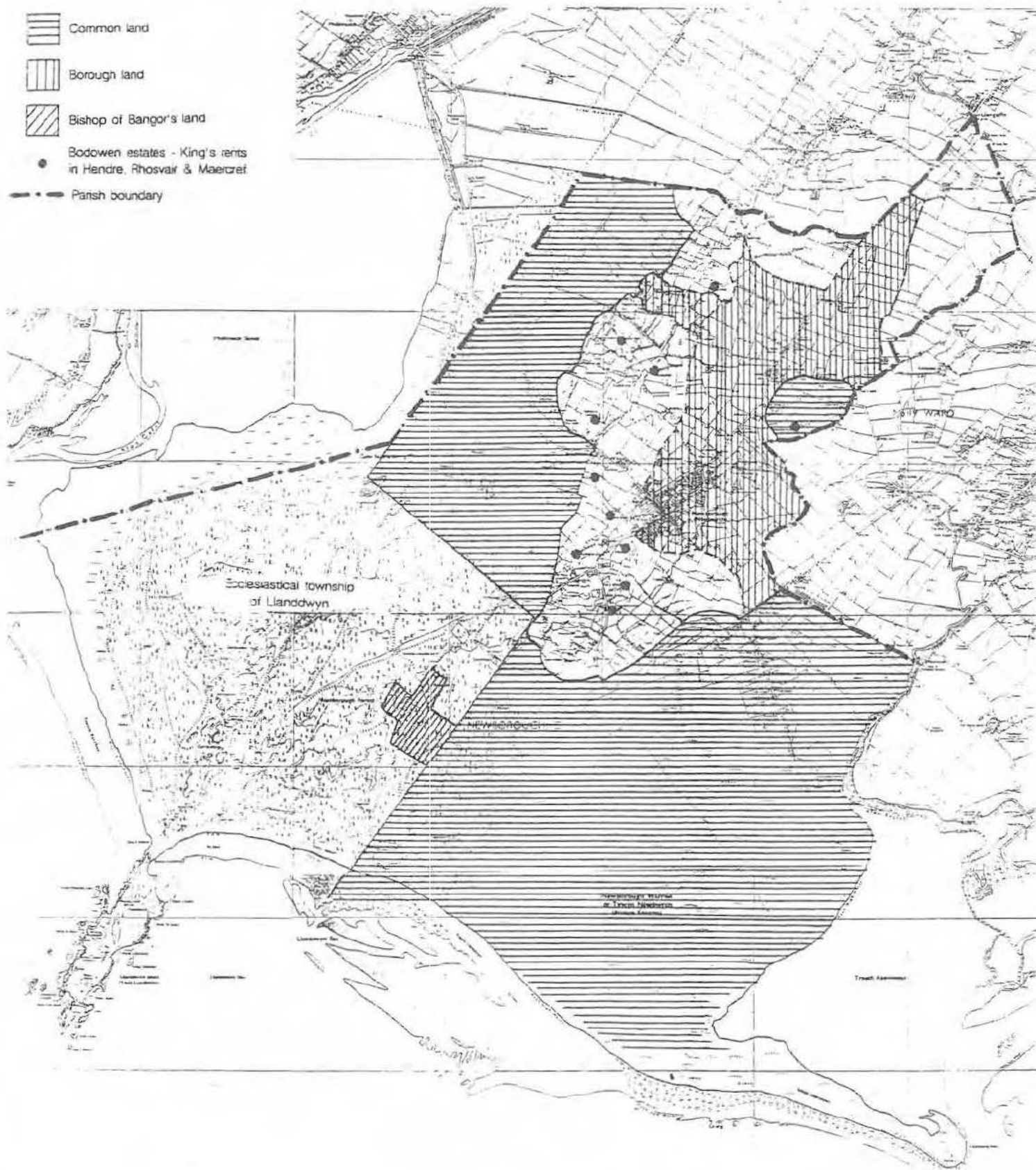


Fig. 34 Rhosyr.

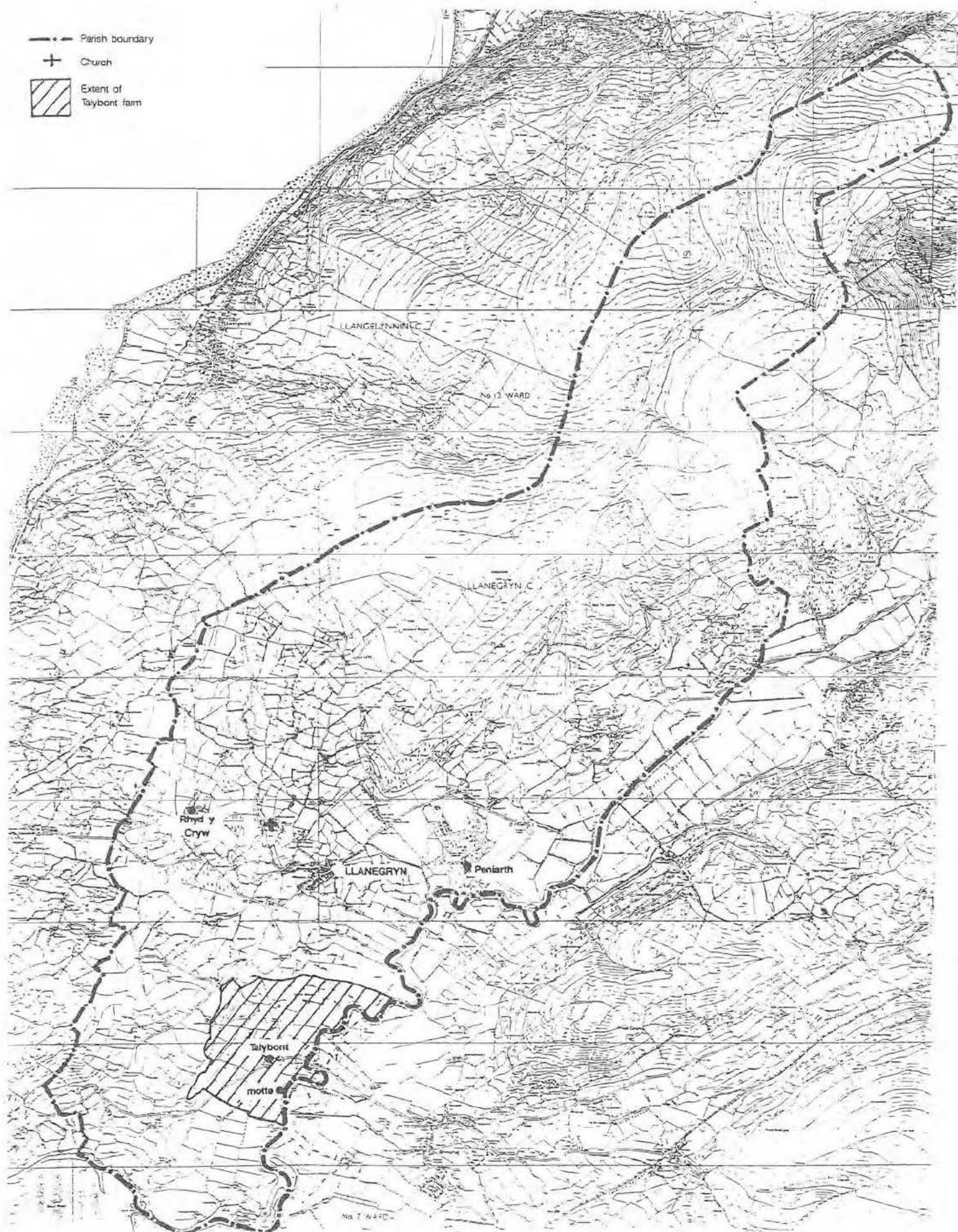
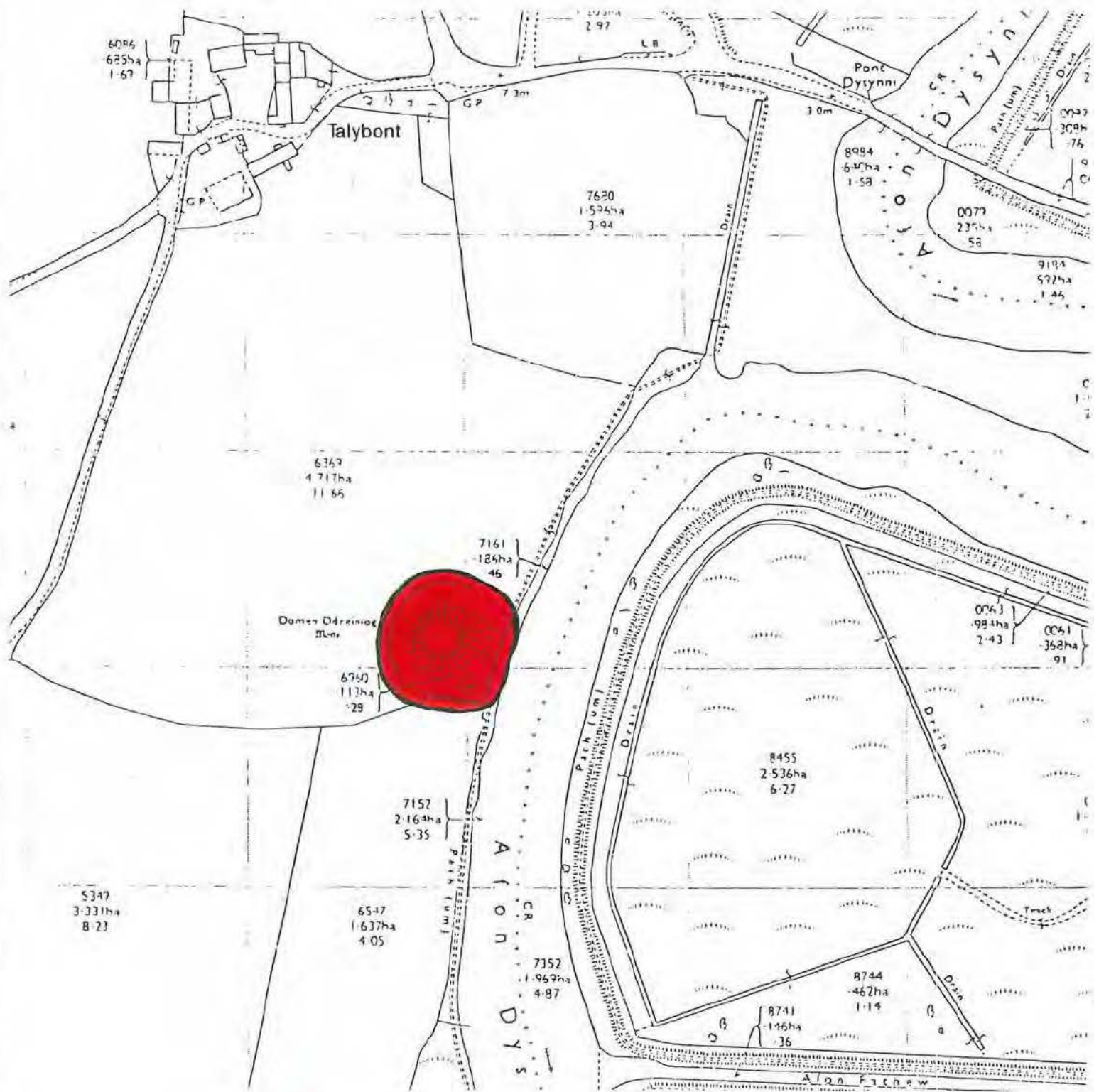


Fig. 36 Talybont.




 extent of scheduled area

Fig. 37 Talybont.

- Trefriw parish boundary
- - - Llanmynhwyn parish boundary
- + Church
- ▨ Fields NOT owned by Gwydir Estate



Fig. 38 Trefriw.

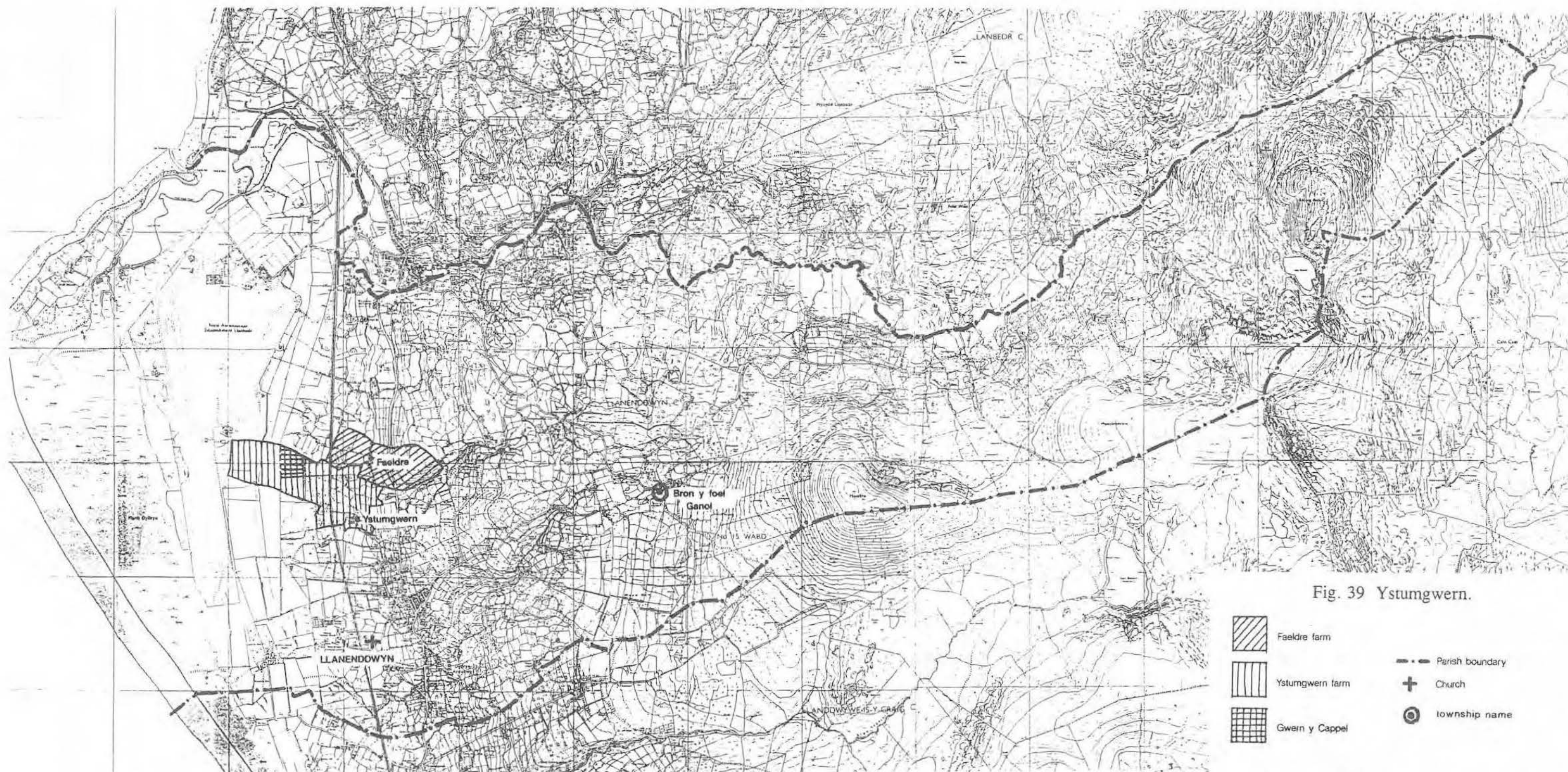








Fig. 39 Ystumgwern.

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Faeldre farm |  | Parish boundary |
|  | Ystumgwern farm |  | Church |
|  | Gwern y Cappel |  | township name |

