

TRYSGLWYN WIND FARM, AMLWCH  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G1359)

REPORT NO. 187

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

# TRYSGLWYN WIND FARM, AMLWCH ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G1359)

prepared for National Wind Power

by R. Roberts & A. Davidson

illustrated by H. Riley

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**Gwynedd Archaeological Report No. 187**

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT TRYSGLWYN WIND FARM, AMLWCH (G1359)

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 National Wind Power Ltd. are constructing a wind farm, comprising fourteen wind turbines at Trysglwyn Fawr, Amlwch. An initial archaeological assessment of the area of the then proposed development was carried out in October, 1992, by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (contracts) and a report (GAT - *Archaeological Assessment at Proposed Wind Farm, Trysglwyn Fawr, Rhosybol, Ynys Mon: Stage 1 Report*) produced outlining the archaeological implications of the proposed scheme. The aims of this report were to identify the archaeological resource in the vicinity of the works, evaluate the resource and make recommendations to avoid or lessen the impact of the scheme on the archaeology. Although a number of sites were noted, none were to be affected by the proposed development. However a watching brief was recommended to be undertaken once topsoil stripping had commenced, and condition 10 of the planning decision required that access be given to the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust or any archaeological body recommended by the planning authority prior to the commencement of and during work on site, to allow the recording of any archaeological remains uncovered by the works.

1.2 Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) submitted a Project Design and costs for carrying out the recommended works. These were accepted and the Contracts Section was contracted to undertake the archaeological monitoring at Trysglwyn windfarm during soil stripping. The field work took place on the 3rd and 13th November and 4th December 1995.

## 2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 The initial archaeological assessment of the proposed wind farm identified nine sites of archaeological interest, seven within the area of the proposed development and a further two outside the area, but in close proximity. These sites range in date from the Prehistoric to the Post-medieval period. Of the seven sites located within the proposed development area, none was considered by the authors of the report to be at risk from the development.

2.2 The archaeological response recommended in the initial report was restricted to continuous monitoring during topsoil stripping as part of an archaeological watching brief. Recent aerial photographic material, gathered during the exceptionally dry summer of 1995, indicated the existence of sub-surface features near turbines 11, 12 and 13. These are possible settlement or agricultural features, the characteristics of which would suggest them to be of Romano-British or Medieval date.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 **General** The sites of nine of the fourteen turbine bases were investigated either once topsoil stripping had been undertaken, or as part of a continuous watching brief. The bases of turbines 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9, were examined after archaeological cleaning of the sub-plough soil surface using a combination of trowelling and hoe-ing, and the bases of 11, 12 and 13 were examined during and after top-soil removal. Where remains of archaeological interest were recovered they were recorded using a combination of annotated sketch plans, scaled section and plan drawing, photography in black and white negative and colour transparency film, written description and survey using taped offsets. The bases of turbines 1, 2, 5, 10, and 14 were not investigated because of time and financial constraints, and because the results from the adjacent bases suggested there was a very low likelihood of archaeological remains.

**3.2 The photographic record** All photographs were taken on black and white film (Kodak Tmax 400 ASA). General views were taken to place the feature within its setting. Where possible photographs were taken as close to a 90 degree angle to each feature as possible. Detailed views were taken of features where informative. All contain a scale such as a 1.0 or 2.0m ranging rod marked into 0.5m sections. Selected views have also been taken on slide film (Kodachrome ASA 200).

**3.3 The written record** Written descriptions were made of the features concerned, giving an overall concise and objective description with measurements and sketch plans where appropriate.

## **4.0 RESULTS OF WATCHING BRIEF**

### **4.1 General**

Four of the turbine bases contained some archaeology, but nothing was visible in the other five. All but one of the features are of relatively recent date, and comprise agricultural features of Post-medieval (i.e. after 1500) date.

### **4.2 Turbine 4**

The remains of a former earthen field bank were visible as a change in soil colouration running WNW - ESE, along the line of the existing fenced boundary.

### **4.3 Turbine 7**

A field drain was visible crossing this base.

### **4.4 Turbine 12**

A field drain was visible crossing this base.

### **4.5 Turbine 11**

Two parallel linear features (A and B) each with a surviving upper width of c.1.5m were visible crossing the base. These features lay across the northern half of the site, were orientated approximately E-W, and comprised a fill of dark-brown clayey silt, c. 0.13m deep, which underlay the mid-brown modern plough soil. The features are thought to be the remains of ridge and furrow; the fill at the base of the features consists of a mixture of dark plough soil and re-deposited clay probably the result of plough deposition. A fragment of Post-Medieval salt-glaze pottery was found within the fill of B, implying they were in use within the Post-medieval period, although may be earlier in origin. Another though less positive plough cut was noted slightly to the south.

A further linear feature (C), an irregular shaped ditch, 0.3m in depth and 0.84m wide at the top, had been cut into the hard natural clay. The ditch, orientated SW-NE, contained at least four distinct fills: a light orange slightly gritty clay, possibly an eroded solution of the material into which the feature was dug, formed a continuous layer around the base and sides of the ditch, within this were three distinct layers; the lowest, a grey-brown silty clay, with small areas of orange mottling and patches of grey clay was sealed by at least three strands of alternate dark grey-brown (almost black) silt, separated by layers of light-grey silty-clay. This was in turn topped by two further layers: a light band of clayey-silt, above a darker band of clay and soil mixed, possibly the remnants of a previous ploughing horizon; this horizon sealed the whole feature. This feature was most clearly visible in the NE section of the base pit, but was not observed in plan. A similar feature (E) was visible in the SW section of the base, and it seems likely that the two features visible in section were originally joined in plan.

A further ditch-like feature (E) was noted in the south-east section of the base, and like feature (C) it was dug into the natural clay. However, its upper fills had been partly disturbed and truncated by feature (B). The nature and deposition of the fill in (E) was similar to that of (C), with a corresponding dark grey-brown layer of silt marking the upper limits of the surviving fill of the feature (E). In addition, it was noted that a number of angular and sub-angular stones (c. up to 5cm in width) were distributed throughout all layers of the fill, suggesting that the layers were in a semi-fluid state at the time of their deposition.

The most likely explanation of the sequence is that feature (C/E) is the remains of an agricultural ditch, probably once part of a Medieval (?) or early Post-medieval field system. At some time during the Post-Medieval period the feature appears to have been abandoned following successive silting. Subsequently the field layout was reorganised and the earlier feature (C/E) ploughed across and partially removed in the process.

## 5.0 THE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

The present agricultural landscape in the area of Trysglwyn-fawr, Taldrwst Mawr, Ty-pridd and Rhiwmoel Bach comprises a network of enclosures which are likely to date from the eighteenth century. Archive material was found to be relatively patchy, and mostly of a late date. The holdings which formed part of the Medieval township of Pwllcoch, in the hundred of Twrcelyn was in the ownership of several estates by the end of the 18th century, including that of Llanddyfnan and Llysdulas. The farm of Trysglwyn-fawr remained part of the Llanddyfnan estate until 1873, when after being held in Chancery it was sold to William Hughes. The Tithe of c. 1840 names the Reverend Evan Williams as owner of Taldrws (Taldrwst Mawr), Ty-pridd then formed part of the estate of one Richard Clones and Rhiwmoel (Bach) belonged to a Mrs. Margaret Williams.

The field patterns as they now exist appear to have been largely in place by at least 1818, as is evidenced by the 1st edition 2" Ordnance Survey map.

The Tithe map and accompanying schedule of c. 1840, provided information regarding landownership and the extent of individual holdings, though did not provide details of the layout of individual fields or field names. However, it is clear from the boundaries shown (ie. the farm boundaries) that the landscape morphology has largely remained unchanged from the end of the eighteenth century, through the mid-nineteenth century up to the present day.

Where alterations have taken place these are mostly recent, and are due to the removal of field boundaries to allow the formation of larger enclosures, such as in the areas to the north of Ty-pridd and to the east of Taldrwst Bach. Within the area, and close to the site of turbine 11, though to the west of the area excavated a minor shift in the alignment of the SW-NE field boundary occurred between 1818 and 1840, the earlier boundary is still visible as a linear feature on aerial photographs. The plough features located at turbine 11 are approximately on a similar alignment to a boundary first shown on the 1818 map and are likely to be contemporary. The ditch (feature C/E, see above) does not feature in the cartographic evidence, nor does it lie on a similar alignment to those features which are recorded. It is therefore probable that the ditch is part of an earlier system, redundant by the turn of the 18th/19th century.

## 6.0 SUMMARY

Following the removal of topsoil, the sites of 9 of the 14 turbine bases were examined. Archaeological remains were slight: five of the turbine bases revealed no archaeology, three revealed recent (i.e. 19th century or later) agricultural features, and one contained a ditch, possibly Medieval in date, overlain by ridge and furrow ploughing.

The features form part of the developing agricultural landscape and are indicative of the sweeping re-organisations that took place during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when many field systems were laid out in a new rectangular form.

## **7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **7.1 Unpublished sources**

Gwynedd County Council, Caernarfon Archives

Gwynedd Archives, Llangefni

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust: SMR information (including aerial photographs)

Tithe schedule for the parish of Amlwch

The 2" draft for the first edition of the 1" Ordnance Survey map, (surveyed in 1818, drawn in 1820)

UCNW Archives, Bangor University

### **7.2 Published sources**

OS 1:2500 County Series, Sheets VII.2, and III.14, 1900

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Davies W, 1810, *Agriculture of North Wales*

Hall E Hyde, 1952, *A Description of Caernarfonshire 1809-11*

Lewis S, 1833, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*

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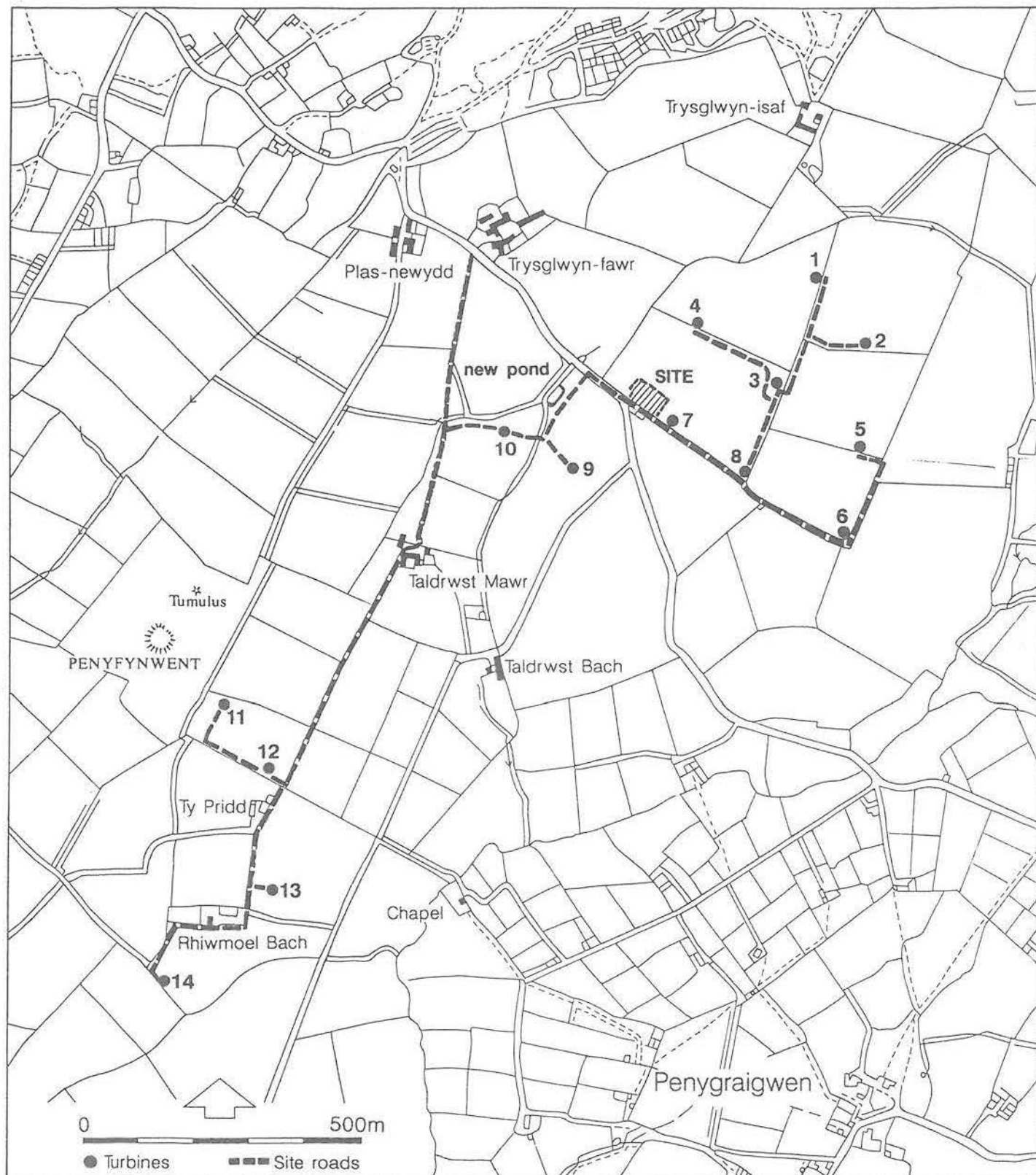


Fig. 1 Location plan - showing turbine locations & site roads.

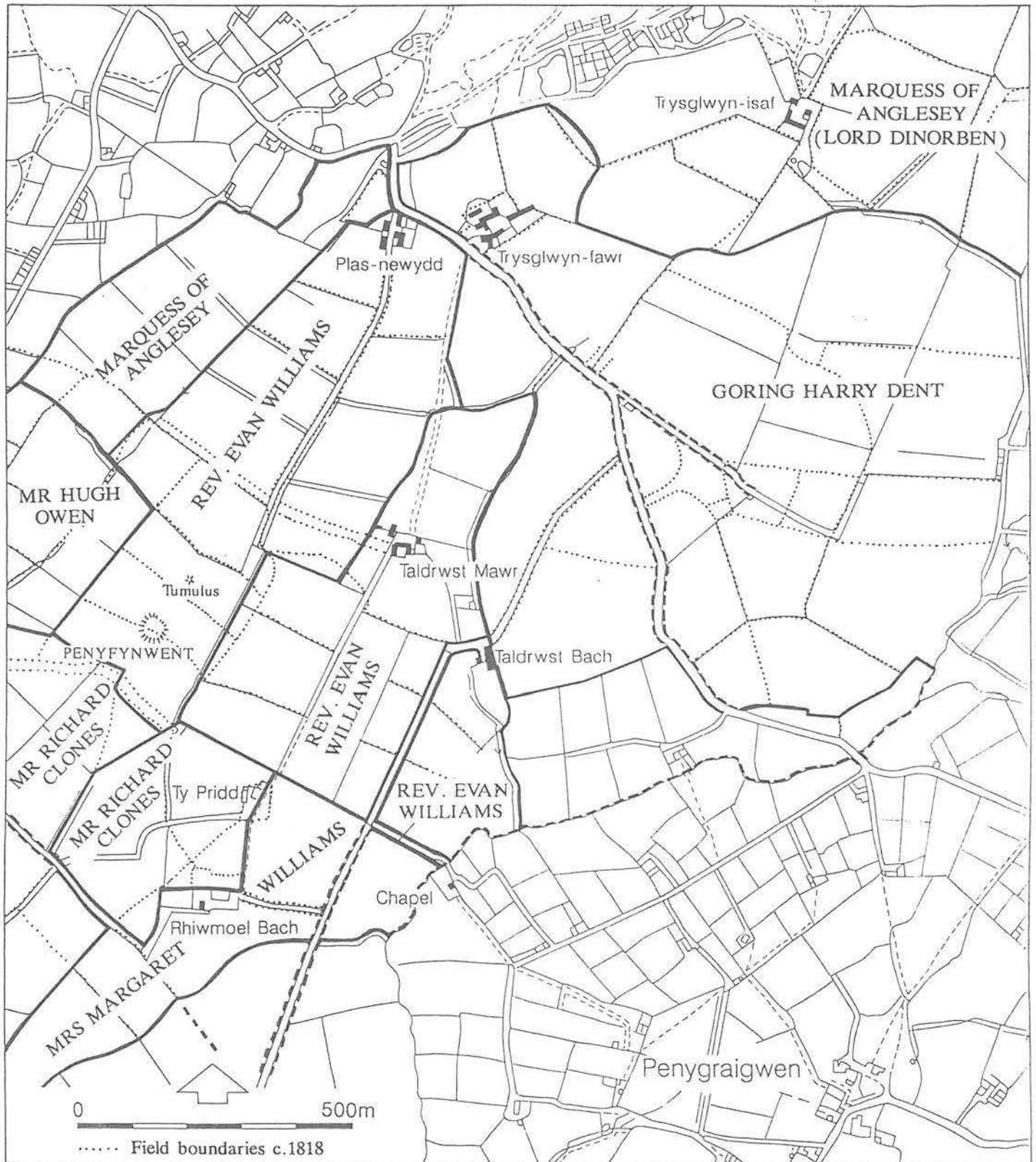


Fig. 2 Location plan - showing ownership & boundaries of holdings  
 (from Tithe map of Amlwch c. 1840)  
 & field boundaries (from OS 1st Edition c. 1818)



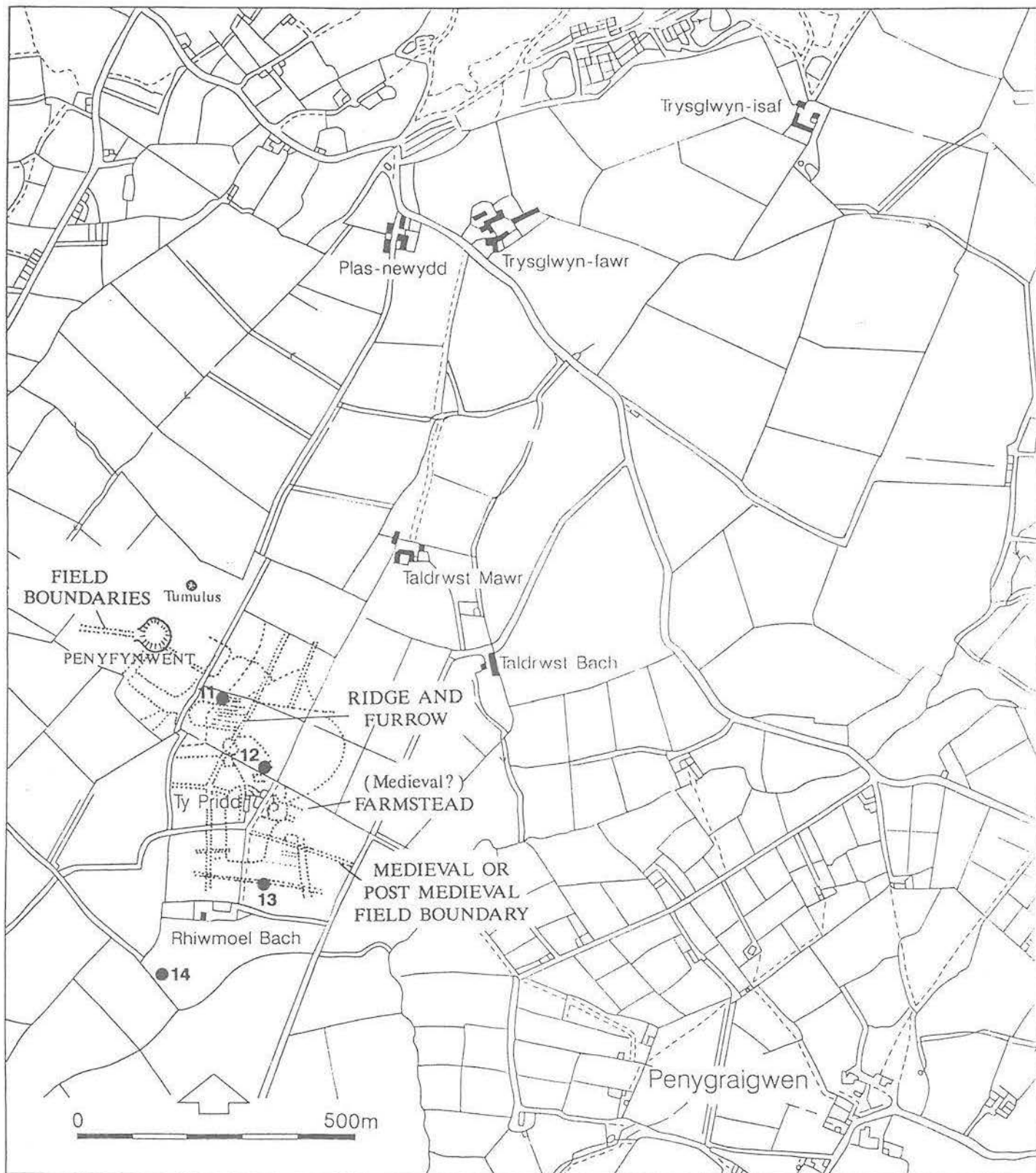


Fig. 3 Location plan - showing features transcribed from aerial photographs (summer 1995)

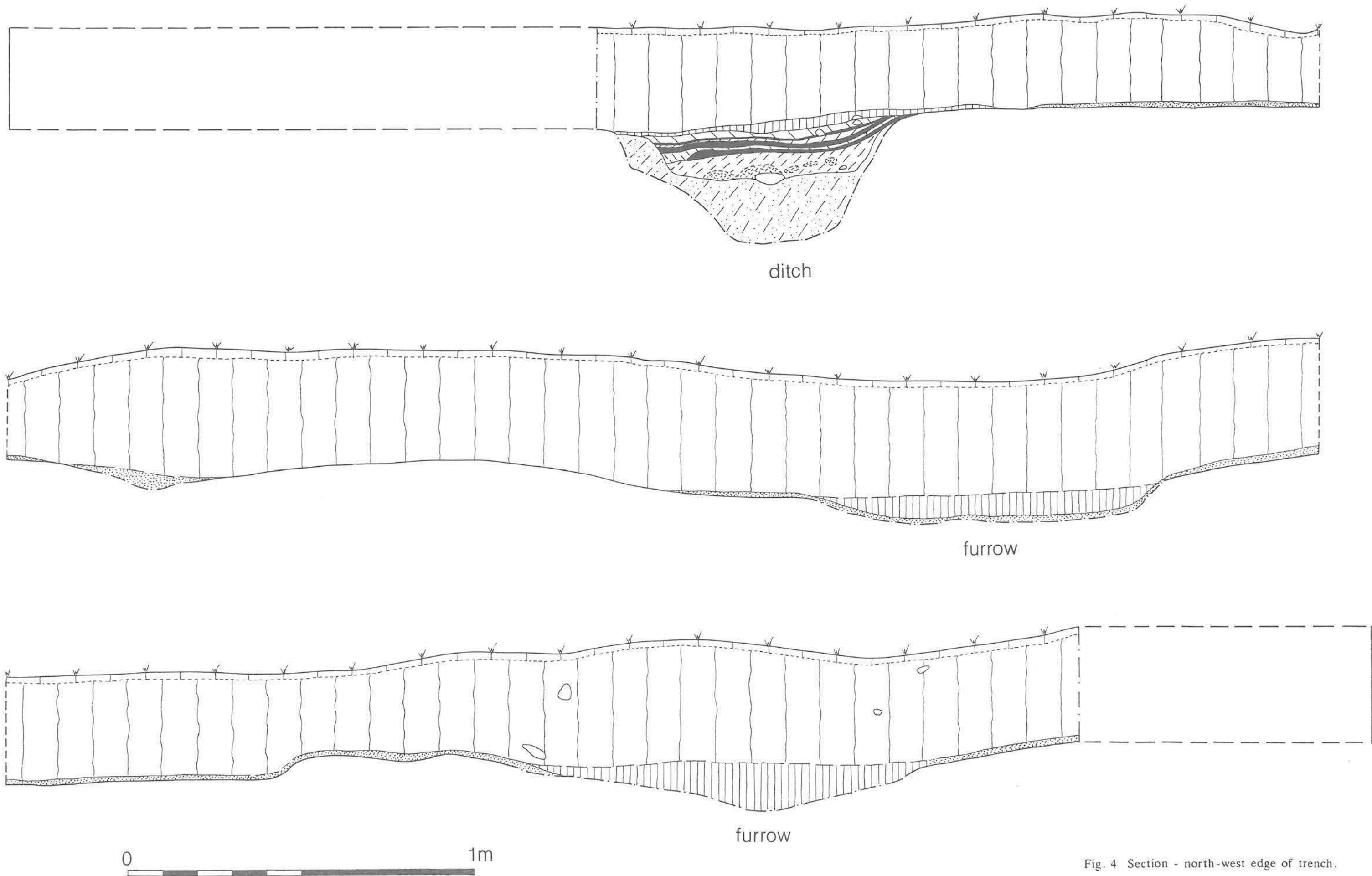


Fig. 4 Section - north-west edge of trench.

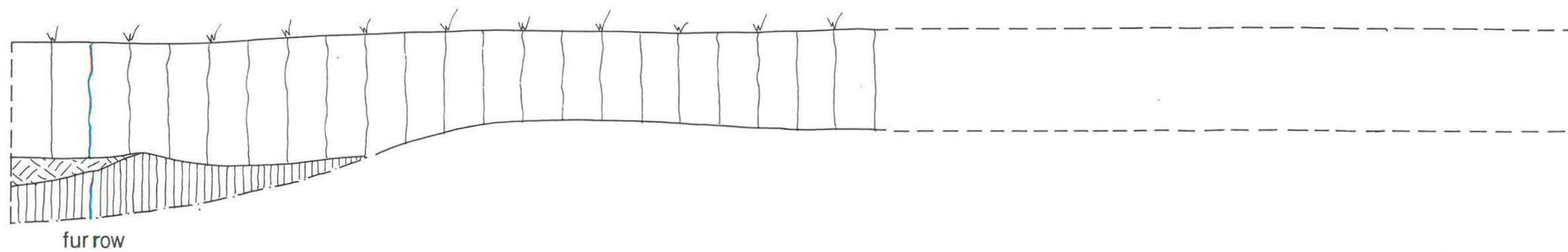
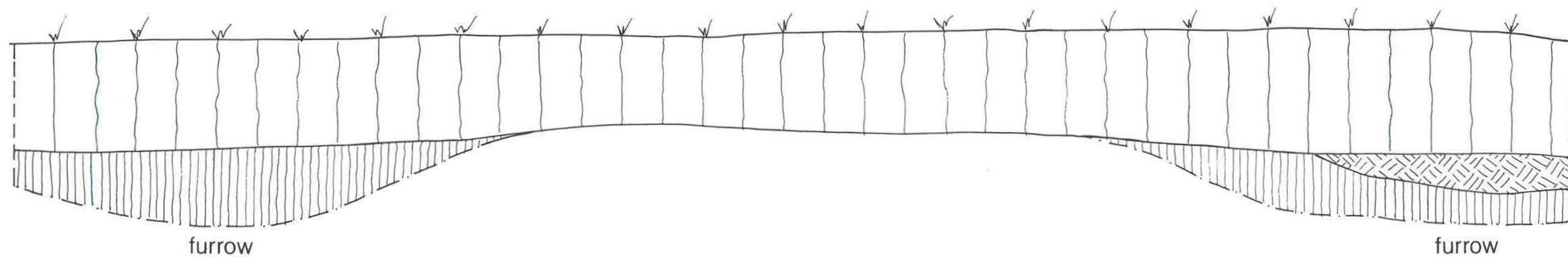
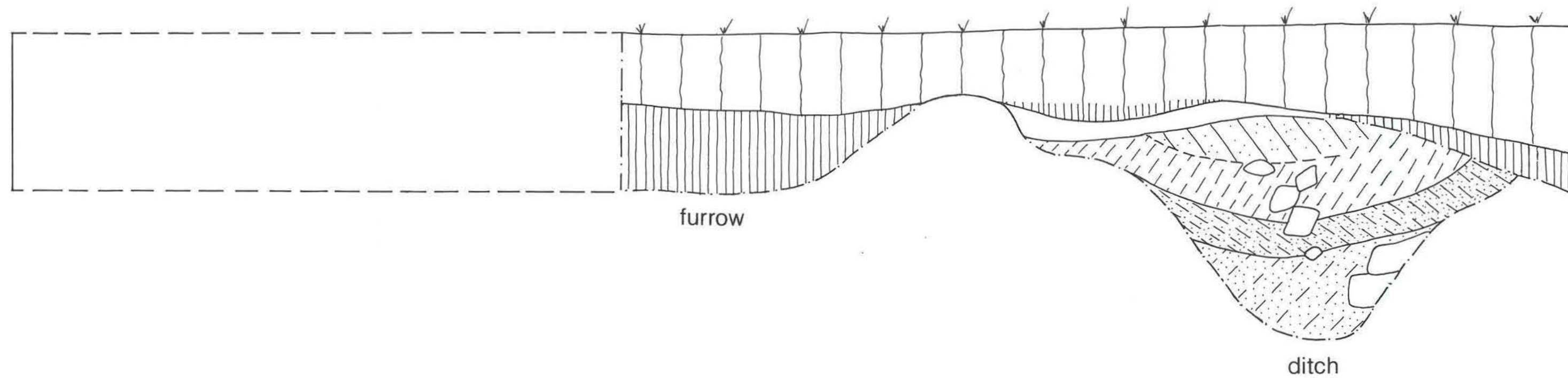


Fig. 5 Diagrammatic section - south-east edge of trench.  
(approx. scale as for Fig. 4)