

HENLLYS HALL, LLANFAES

ENABLING WORKS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Report No. 460

Prepared for

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By

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## **G1729 HENLLYS HALL: WATCHING BRIEF ON DRAINAGE WORKS**

### **Summary**

*A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of a new drain from Henllys Hall to Llanfaes. Only one feature, a ditch of unknown date, was recorded. The difficulties of observing archaeological remains in a narrow trench mean that the scarcity of features need not reflect a lack of archaeology in the area.*

### **Introduction**

A foul drain was to be excavated in advance of a new holiday cottage development at Henllys Hall. This was to run across the golf course from grid ref SH60647760 to SH60167761. As part of a planning condition specified by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS), Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was asked, by the contractors R L Davies and Son Ltd, to carry out a watching brief while the pipe trench was being excavated. An archaeological assessment and evaluation had already been undertaken on the site of the proposed development (LUAU 2001a and LUAU 2001b).

Henllys Hall is the former site of a medieval court (*llys*), and an associated town called Llanfaes. Although the exact location of the medieval buildings is not known, the pipe trench runs close to what may have been part of the medieval town. Several medieval coins have been found on the golf course by metal detectorists, in a concentration that suggests a market (for a summary of the history of the site see Longley (1998) and LUAU (2001a).

### **Methodology**

The trench was dug in sections, and rapidly backfilled to prevent trench collapse. It was typically dug to a depth of 1m, and was 0.7m wide; each of the eight manholes measured approximately 2.0m by 2.5m. Most of the trench was inspected before being backfilled but the western end flooded with water and parts were not visible for worthwhile inspection. At the start of the project the machine operator was asked by the clients not to backfill or lay pipes until the open trench had been inspected. This generally worked well, and GAT staff were able to keep in touch with the operator to ensure site visits were not made unnecessarily.

Visits were made during December and January 2001 on the following occasions, when notes and photographs were taken.

12/12/01 JK; 14/12/01 JK; 08/01/02 JK; 10/01/02 JK; 11/01/02 JK; 30/01/02 DH.  
(JK=Jane Kenney; DH=David Hopewell).

The project archive with photographs, field notes and sketches has been placed into the Sites and Monuments Record at GAT filed under G1729.

### **Results**

In most of the trench a layer of topsoil varying between 0.2m and 0.4m in depth directly overlaid the natural reddish-brown clay. Modern ceramic land drains were buried deep within the natural clay. In the eastern corner of the golf course a ditch was visible in manhole 1 (see fig 2 for location of the manholes). This was over 1.6m wide and more than 0.5m deep, and filled with homogenous brown clayey silt. This ditch seems to have run south-east to north-west parallel to the road. It produced no dating evidence.

Between manholes 3 and 4 was an area with hollows filled by a stony deposit, containing stones up to 0.3m in length. These may have been either natural undulations in the clay or drainage features; insufficient could be seen to interpret the features. No artefacts were found associated with these features.

There are local reports that a quantity of soil was dumped over the eastern end of the golf course during its construction, but no trace of this could be seen in the sides of the pipe trench.

Rain in January caused flooding of the trench, which could not be inspected from manhole 5 to just before manhole 8.

### **Conclusions**

The watching brief recorded no significant archaeological features, with the exception of the ditch visible in manhole 1. However, recognition and interpretation of archaeological features in a trench 0.7m wide is very difficult, and it is usually the presence of finds or charcoal which would prove indicative, and in this case neither were present. The lack of evidence from the watching brief does not, therefore, indicate a lack of archaeology in the area, but simply that it was not identifiable in the pipe trench.

### **Bibliography**

Longley, D., 1998 *Medieval Settlement on Anglesey*, GAT Report 308, Unpublished report.  
LUAU, 2001a *Henllys Hall, Beaumaris, Anglesey: Assessment Report*, Unpublished report.  
LUAU, 2001b *Henllys Hall, Beaumaris, Anglesey: Evaluation Report*, Unpublished report.

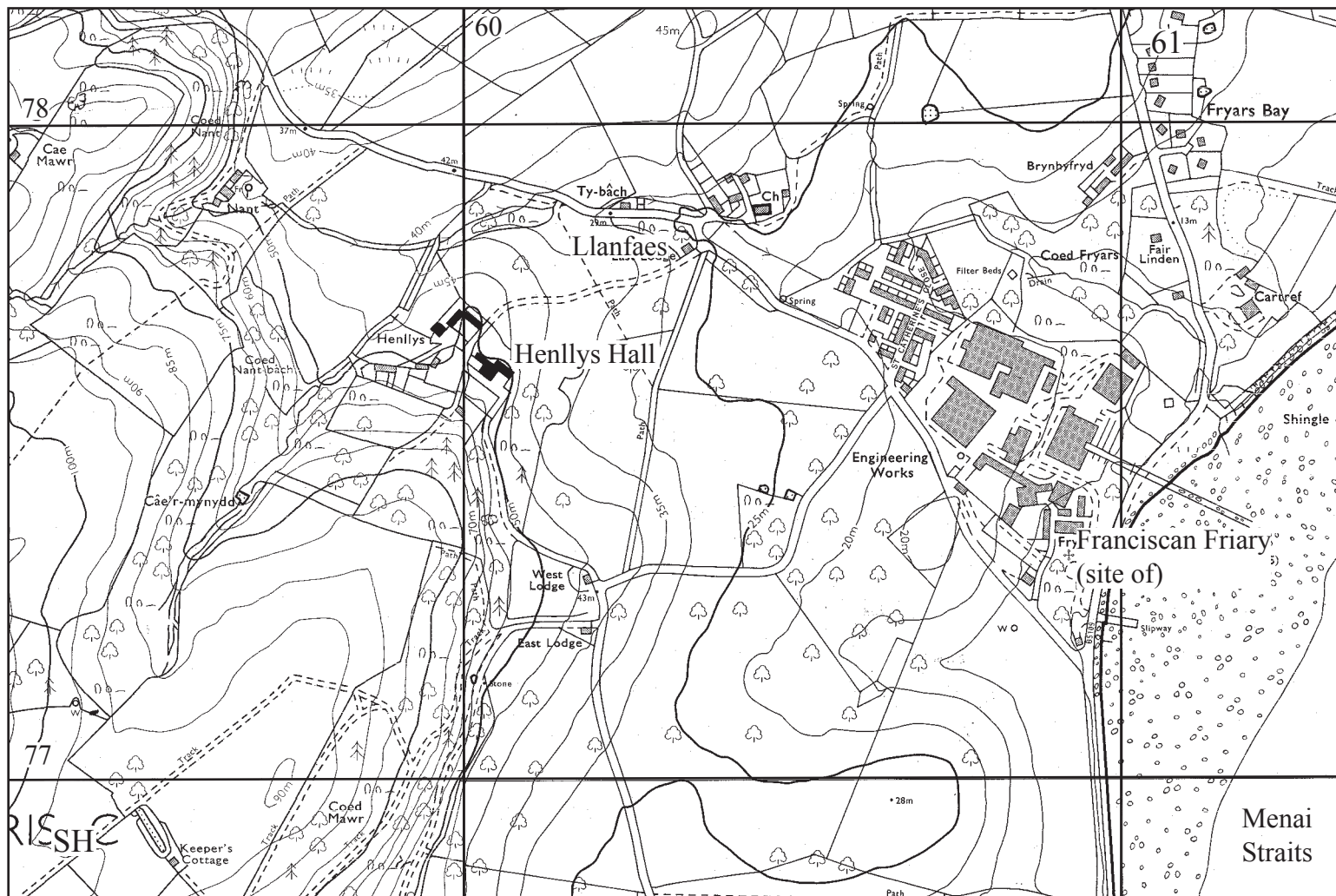


Figure 1: general site location

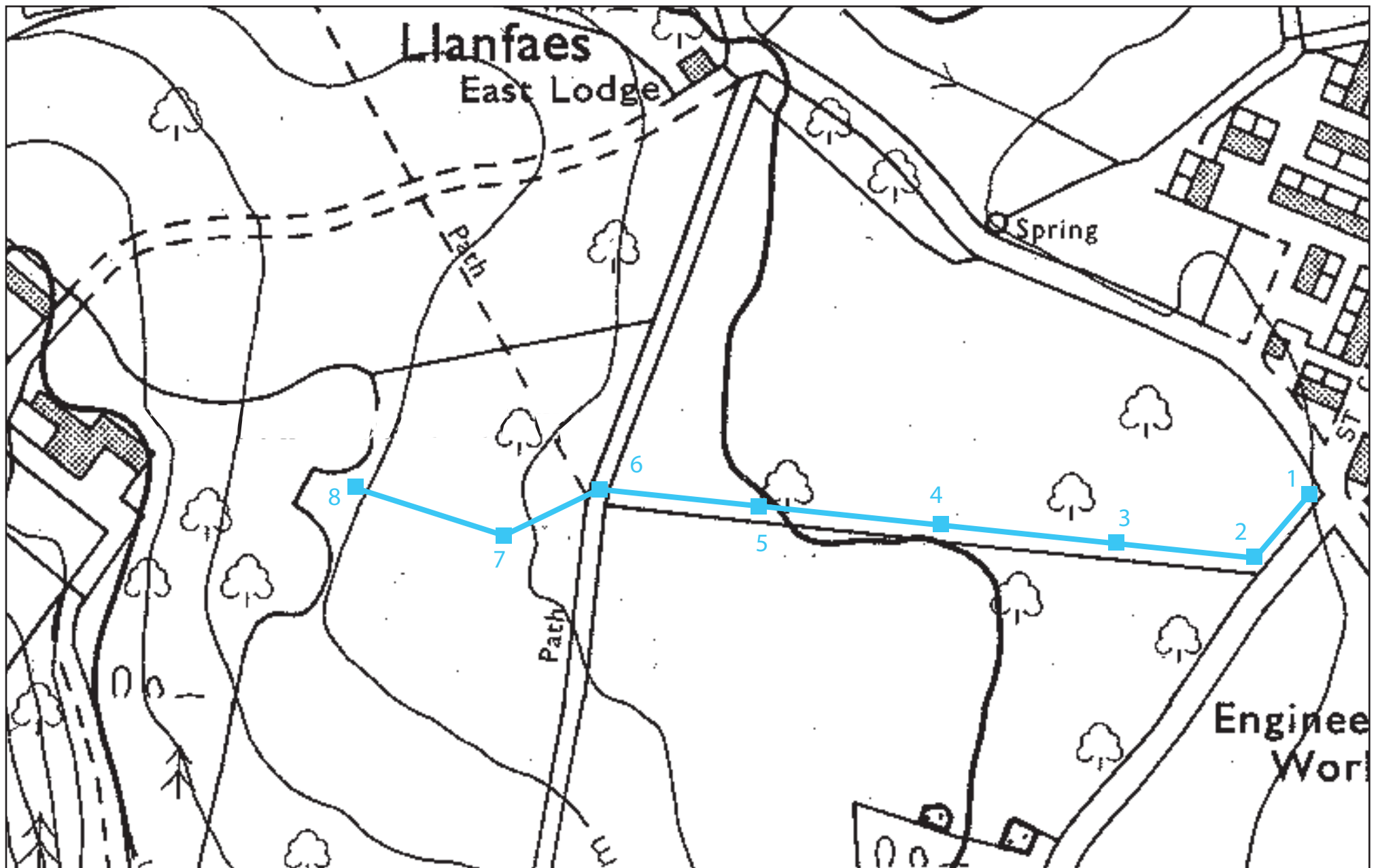


Figure 2: location of pipe trench and manholes

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