

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Persondy, Llangynidr, Powys
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY

CPAT Report No 262

Persondy, Llangynidr, Powys
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY

R. Hankinson
February 1998

Report for Dr P. Saundby.

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street, Welshpool, Powys, SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax (01938) 552179

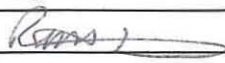
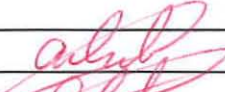
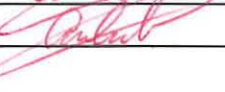
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The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL
tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 17th November the Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) provided a quotation to Dr P. Saundby for an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a new garage at Persondy, Llangynidr, Powys (SO 1550 1932). The evaluation had been required by the Brecon Beacons National Park planning authority as part of the planning process. The programme of work required was detailed in an archaeological design brief (EVB 244) produced by the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust acting in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the Brecon Beacons National Park.
- 1.2 The CPAT Contracts quotation was accepted by Dr Saundby in writing on 2nd December 1997 and the desk-top study was carried out at the end of December and in early January 1998. Due to unforeseen problems regarding access to the site, CPAT Contracts withdrew from the project. This report therefore consists only of the desk-top study element specified in the evaluation brief and is written at Dr Saundby's request.

2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The development plot is located near the centre of the village of Llangynidr at SO 1550 1932 and occupies a gentle, generally north-east facing, slope at an elevation of approximately 135mOD. The village is located near the base of the valley of the River Usk, to the north-west of Nant Cleisfer, a tributary stream of the Usk; to the south-west the valley of Cwm Cleisfer cuts into the northern slopes of Mynydd Llangynidr which rises to more than 550mD.
- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area is composed of sandstones of Old Red Sandstone (Devonian) age. The soils derived from these underlying strata are well drained reddish coarse and fine loamy soils of the Newnham Soil Association (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A small amount of evidence perhaps relating to Prehistoric occupation has been recorded in the immediate vicinity of Llangynidr, consisting of two possible Bronze Age standing stones PRNs 979 and 5357. PRN 979 is no longer extant having been originally recorded by Jones in 1809 (Jones & Bailey, 1911, 188) as "...now thrown down, upon which we believe there was formerly an inscription, but it is now completely effaced". The remaining evidence relating to occupation in the Bronze Age was provided by the find of a socketed bronze axe (PRN 5679) on the bank of the Nant Cleisfer near Llangynidr at SO 152189, consideration of the information provided by Savory (1963, 308) and (1971, 17) suggests that it was found between 1958 and 1963 and was subsequently presented to Brecon Museum. No further evidence relating to the area of the village prior to the medieval period has been found, although cairns of presumed Bronze Age date are present on Mynydd Llangynidr to the south.
- 3.2 In the medieval period the area was part of the manor of Tretower which was granted (with the adjoining manor of Crickhowell) in c.1483 to Sir William Herbert of Raglan castle who later became the Earl of Pembroke (Lloyd, 127). Evidence that there was some occupation in the area of the village during the medieval period is suggested by the local parish church of St Mary and St Cynidr and its churchyard. The existing church dates to the present century, its predecessor having been restored in 1873 and then almost totally destroyed by fire in 1928; only the reputedly 13th century font and a small number of other fittings are said to survive from the earlier church (Silvester & Dorling, 1993, 52). Silvester & Dorling also refer to traces of a circular churchyard which may point to an early medieval foundation.
- 3.3 A group of scheduled earthworks (PRN 5677; SAM Brecknock 187) which are thought to represent an abandoned part of the medieval village are located in the field to the north-west of Maerdy Lane at SO 154192. The earthworks apparently consist of at least three building platforms with associated garden plots and boundaries; pottery from the 13th-14th centuries has been found nearby (Burnham, 1995, 172). This would appear to confirm that there was some occupation of Llangynidr in the medieval period, although the extent and potential importance of the village at that time is difficult to determine due to the construction of later buildings. An excavation in 1994 at Greenacres (SO

15331922) produced no evidence of medieval occupation, and would therefore appear to have fallen outside the area of the medieval village.

- 3.4 There are obvious surviving traces of the post medieval village; recorded buildings of this date include: Glan yr Afon house (PRN 20783), Llangynidr Mill Site (PRN 9767), Llangynidr Rectory (PRN 20784) and the Old Coach House (PRN 34775). Jones, writing in 1809 (Jones & Bailey, 189) appears to confirm that at that time the village was centred on the vicinity of the former mill, approximately 250m to the south-west of the church; although he describes the appearance of the village as "wretched", he also notes that four agricultural fairs a year were held there. It would therefore seem likely that the village was a fairly typical rural settlement during this period, forming a focus for the agricultural activity of the surrounding district.
- 3.5 A factor which appears to have had some effect on the village in the post medieval and modern periods was the limestone quarrying carried out in the southern part of the present parish. Limestone was perhaps first burnt for local agricultural purposes, although, following the opening of the Brecon and Abergavenny canal to Llangynidr in 1797 (Hadfield, 1960, 163), it seems very likely that significant quantities were sold outside the district. The ironworks which were formerly located to the south of Mynydd Llangynidr would also have created an increased demand for limestone during the 19th century.
- 3.6 Modern occupation of the village itself and its immediate surroundings has essentially seen a continuance of the previous patterns of settlement, although a significant increase in the size of Llangynidr has obviously occurred in the present century compared to the village as it was depicted on the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1905 (Fig 5). The present extent of the parish was defined by an Act of 1894, which separated the agricultural area of the parish (centred on the village) from the industrial area to the south of Mynydd Llangynidr; the population of the agricultural section is said to have stayed relatively constant between 1672 and 1891 (Jones & Bailey, 1911, 190).

4 DESK-TOP STUDY

- 4.1 The potential importance of the evaluation area is suggested by the earthworks, which are thought to relate to abandoned medieval settlement, in the adjoining field scheduled as a monument of national importance by CADW: Welsh Historic Monuments (PRN 5677; SAM Brecknock 187), and noted in para 3.3, above. The field in which the earthworks lie was a part of field No 365, known as "Berllan Parsondy" (Parsonage Orchard), in the Tithe survey of 1842 (Fig 3). In 1842 Berllan Parsondy included all the land to the north-east of its present boundary (including the evaluation area) bounded by Maerdy Lane and Dyffryn Road, with the exception of Persondy and an adjoining plot (field No 364) to its south-west known as "Scybour Parsondy" (Parsonage Barn or Granary). The north-eastern end of Berllan Parsondy has since been enclosed to provide garden plots, the majority of which are first evident on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (Brecknock 41.1) of 1889 (Fig 4); the evaluation area itself appears to have been recently enclosed from the field to provide a garden plot for Persondy; there is no evidence on any of the available cartographic sources of there having been a structure within the evaluation area.
- 4.2 The two fields named above were both glebe (church) land in 1842, and this together with their names suggests strongly that Persondy was originally the parsonage for the incumbent of the parish. Jones, writing in 1809, confirms this suggestion, describing the parsonage as "a gloomy old building" lying between the church and the village "to which about forty-eight statute acres of glebe land are attached" (Jones & Bailey, 1911, 189). It is evident that Persondy was superseded as the parsonage in the earlier part of the 19th century following Jones' description; Lewis (1833), states that "the parsonage house was erected at the sole expense of the Rev. William Davies, the present incumbent". William Davies was instituted as rector in 1821 (Jones & Bailey, 1911, 192); his later parsonage (PRN 20784) is depicted to the north-east of the church and named "Rectory" on the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1889 (Fig 4).
- 4.3 The former parsonage is also described in a terrier of Llangynidr glebe lands dated 30/8/1720 (National Library of Wales - Maybery III No 4176). This refers to "One mansion house consisting of four rooms on the floor and three chambers with a barn consisting of three bays, stable and other edifices thereunto belonging and garden, orchard and tilladges and mearing about on every side to the comon and high waies leading to the church of Llangunnider...". This description almost certainly relates to Persondy and the adjoining fields named in the Tithe survey.

- 4.4 Burnham (1995, 172) has suggested that the bank around Persondy garden (which delineates field No 364, "Scybour Parsondy", in the Tithe survey) is similar to those present in the area of scheduled earthworks to the south (PRN 5677; SAM Brecknock 187), suggesting that it is quite probably part of the same plan. In the light of the area having been glebe land this suggested relationship should be a matter of some interest; it may well have relevance to the potential dating of Persondy, its origin as a parsonage, and the origin and nature of the scheduled earthworks. The earliest known incumbent of the parish is William Wykham who was instituted in 1397 (Jones & Bailey, 1911, 192), although whether Persondy, or any earlier house on the site, was in use as a parsonage at that time is unknown.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The study area appears to fall within the medieval extent of the village of Llangynidr and is likely to have been glebe land prior to the 20th century. Its proximity to the earlier parsonage of Persondy and an area thought to represent abandoned medieval settlement (PRN 5677; SAM Brecknock 187), suggests that it may have some relevance to the medieval settlement of Llangynidr.
- 5.2 No direct evidence relating to structures or buildings within the development plot has been revealed by the study, although it should be noted that the earliest available cartographic evidence is dated to 1816-17 (Fig 2), and is therefore unlikely to have any relevance to the medieval occupation of the village.
- 5.3 With the lack of direct evidence relating to the proposed development plot, it is, at present, difficult to quantify its archaeological potential. There is, however, a possibility that sub-surface traces relating to medieval settlement of Llangynidr village may be revealed by excavation.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank the staff of the following organisations for their help and assistance with the desk-top study:

The Sites and Monuments Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Welshpool.

The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, Aberystwyth.

The Powys County Record Office, Llandrindod Wells.

7 SOURCES

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8.2 Documentary Sources

- 1842 Tithe Apportionment, Llangynidr, Powys (dated 2/6/1842).

8.3 Cartographic Sources

- 1816-17 Ordnance Surveyors Drawing No 195 (1:36680). (Fig 2)
- 1842 Tithe map, Llangynidr, Powys. (Fig 3)
- 1889 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 First Edition map, Brecknock 41.1. (Fig 4)
- 1905 Ordnance Survey 1:10560 Second Edition map, Brecknock 41NW (Revised 1903). (Fig 5)

APPENDIX 1**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT PERSONDY, UPPER LLANGYNIDR
SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION
BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST****1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The proposed development of a block of land at Persondy, Llangynidr involves the construction of a garage on an area currently used as a walled garden at (SO15501932).
- 1.2 This area lies within the historic core of llangynidr on a street frontage that might have developed as early as the medieval period. The area is therefore one of archaeological sensitivity with the potential of covering structural remains dating to Llangynidr's early history.
- 1.3 The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in their capacity as advisors to the local planning authority have determined that a field evaluation is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief (No EVB 244 dated 29th September 1997) has been prepared by CPAT Curatorial which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a combination of desk-based assessment and evaluation trenches, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the evaluation trenches;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the field evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed development;
 - 2.1.4 to identify and recommendations options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any further provision for that resource where it is considered necessary.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage one of the evaluation will involve the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary records relating to this part of the town, including documentary and cartographic sources. Archives and repositories will include the County Sites and Monuments Record, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Powys County Archives, Llandrindod Wells, and the RCAHMW, Aberystwyth.
- 3.2 Stage two will take the form of a single trench conforming to the foundation trenches of the proposed garage. Where required this will be taken to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface. Consultation with the client and the curator will be necessary before this depth is exceeded.
- 3.3 The evaluation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:
 - 3.3.1 removal of modern overburden by machine;

- 3.3.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate to fulfil the requirements of the evaluation and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.
- 3.3.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Curatorial Brief), and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.
- 3.3.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to the appropriate local or regional museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.
- 3.4 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Curatorial Brief (section 7). This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Excavation; Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of two skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist, who will also be responsible for undertaking the desk-based assessment. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the assessment and evaluation will take no more than five days in all and that the subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and negotiated access. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

A.M. Gibson
Projects Manager

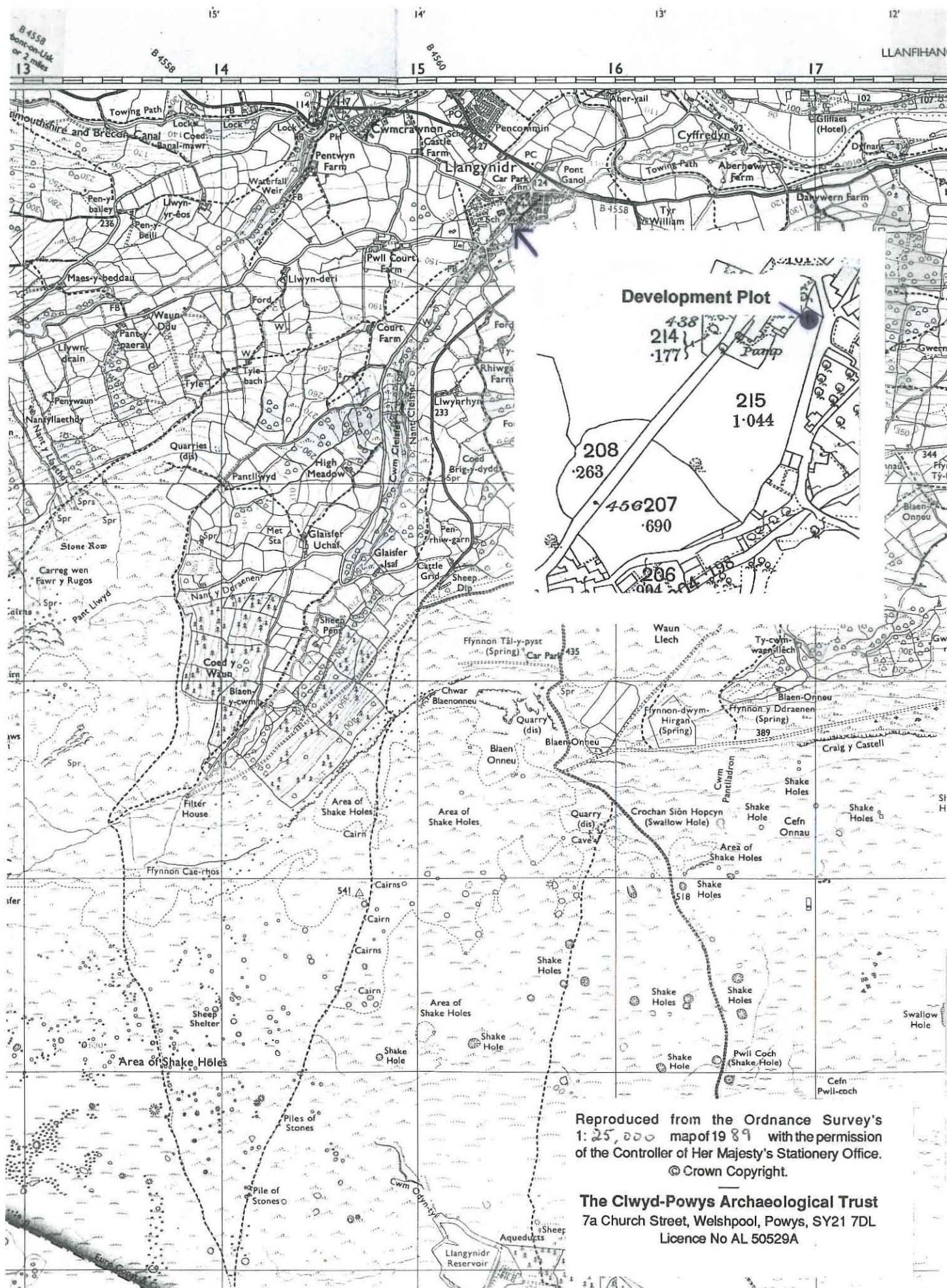


Fig 1 Location of Proposed Development (Scale 1:25000/Inset 1:2500)



Fig 2 Ordnance Surveyors Drawing No 195 (1816-17; Scale 1:36680)

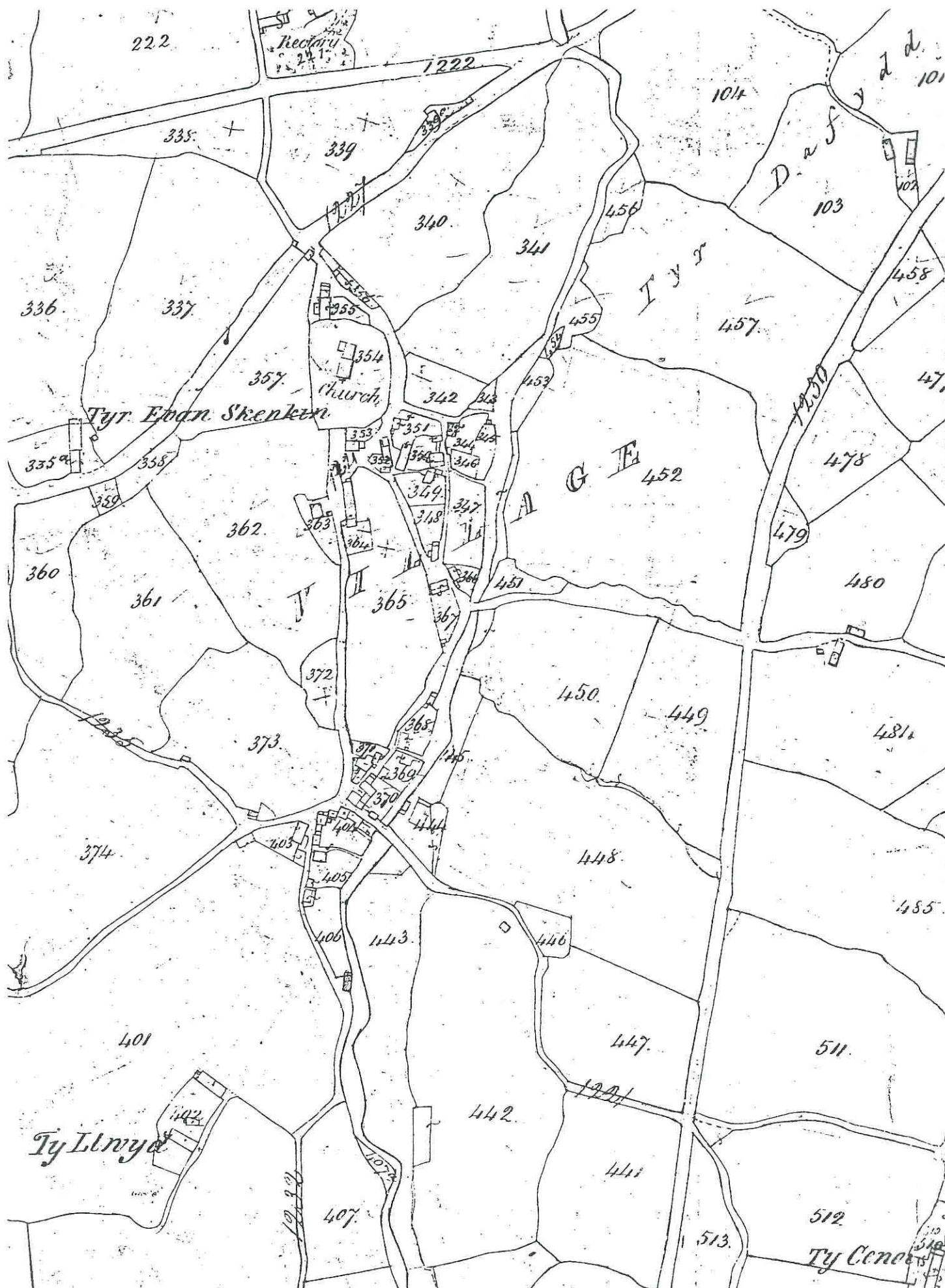


Fig 3 Llangynidr Tithe Map of 1842

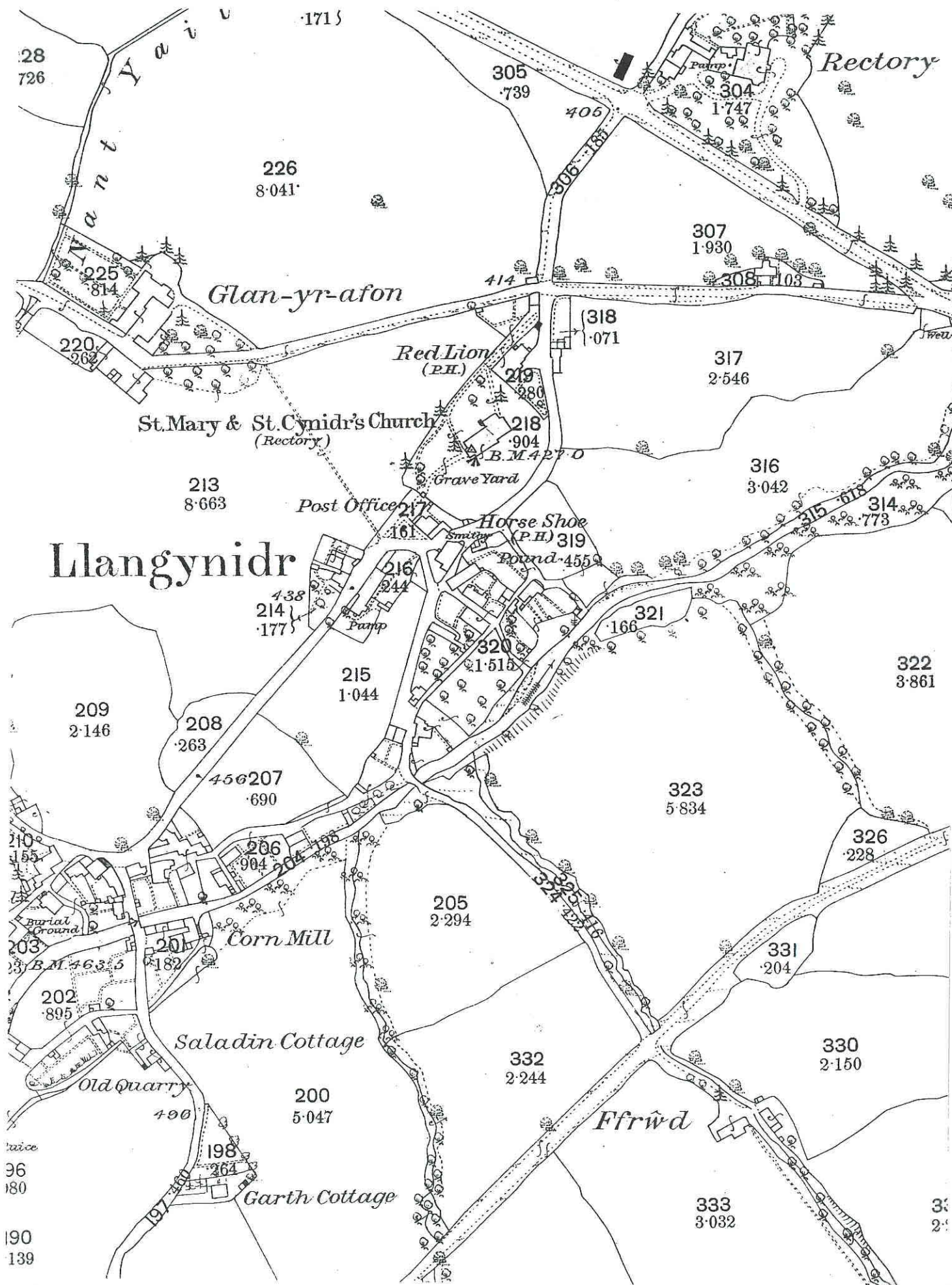


Fig 4 First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (1889; Brecknock 41.1)

