

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Relaying of Two Greens at Llanymynech Golf Club, Shropshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 457

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**Relaying of Two Greens at
Llanymynech Golf Club, Shropshire**
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W G Owen
February 2002

Report for Llanymynech Golf Club

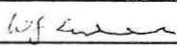
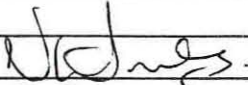
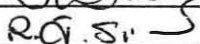
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Fig. 1 Location, 1:2,500

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Recent groundworks at Llanymynech Golf Club involved the removal and re-laying of turf on the 4th and 6th greens. The area lies within Llanymynech hillfort, a site scheduled as an archaeological monument of national importance which straddles the English/Welsh border.
- 1.2 The works form part of an on-going scheme to improve the drainage on the greens, under which a number greens have so far been re-laid. The previous works, which were all in Wales, were undertaken according to Scheduled Monument Consent granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the National Assembly for Wales.
- 1.3 The 4th and 6th greens lie on the English side of the border and an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent granted by English Heritage.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 Geologically, Llanymynech Hill marks the southernmost point of a band of Lower Carboniferous Limestone which extends south from the North Wales coast at Prestatyn. Outcrops of this formation are visible throughout the hillfort. In places the limestone is altered to dolomite with mudstone bands, and both lead and copper ores, with cerussite and malachite as secondary oxidation products, occur in a lode which strikes north-north-east from underground workings known as the Ogof Mine at SJ2660 2222. Soils in lower-lying areas and on terraces between outcrops characteristically overlie drift derived from Palaeozoic sandstone and mudstone (Rudeforth *et al*, 1984).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Llanymynech hillfort lies on a prominent outcrop of carboniferous limestone on the western edge of the Shropshire Plain overlooking the confluence of the Vyrnwy, Tanat and Cain Rivers to the south-west and the Severn Valley to the south-east. The three-kilometre circuit of the ramparts encloses an area of approximately 57 ha, making it one of the largest hillforts in England and Wales. Although the majority of the hillfort lies within Wales, the English border follows the line of the defences on the eastern side, with the north-east defences lying across the border in Shropshire.
- 3.2 Llanymynech Hill has a long history of copper and lead mining dating back to at least the Roman period (Walters 1994). Quarrying of exposed limestone outcrops has also occurred no doubt over long periods, though precise definition is impossible.
- 3.3 Archaeological investigation of the hillfort has so far been rather limited. In 1981 a section through the ramparts was recorded during the laying of a pipe trench adjacent to the approach road to the golf-course, which revealed the stone rampart and ditch of the inner defences, and metalworking debris behind the rampart. Radiocarbon dating of charcoal associated with two separate pits showed that the metalworking was probably undertaken during the period from the 4th century BC to the 1st century AD (Musson 1981; Musson and Northover 1989, 20).
- 3.4 Apart from the study of peat deposits in a pond (at SJ 269221; Martin 1992), the interior of the fort has been the subject of a number of small-scale evaluations in recent years, conducted in connection with applications for scheduled monument consent. An evaluation close to the clubhouse in 1995 revealed no structural evidence of prehistoric occupation, but did recover sherds of Iron Age pottery, metalworking debris and calcined bone from a possible old ground surface (Thomas 1995). Further investigation within the same area in 1997 (Owen 1997) exposed several features of likely Iron Age date, including the inhumation of a small child which was radiocarbon dated to between 770 BC and 370 BC (Owen 1997).
- 3.5 A small-scale excavation undertaken within the area of the 13th Green during October 1999 revealed important evidence for occupation within the hillfort. This included part of a drainage gully for a round hut, together with associated pits or postholes. There was also evidence of prehistoric metalworking,

with fragments of furnace lining and part of a crucible, together with metallurgical residues, demonstrating that copper smelting took place somewhere in the immediate area (Owen 1999).

4 WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 The archaeological watching brief was carried out separately for the two greens. A full written and photographic record was maintained throughout. For both greens the turf and sub-surface peaty loam/sand make-up was mechanically stripped under archaeological supervision and a layer of stone chippings ranging from 50mm to 100mm in diameter then deposited, followed by a layer of sand and loam to form the base for the new green, the intention being to raise the general level and improve the drainage.

4.2 4th Green (SJ 2700 2261; pl 1-4)

4.2.1 The watching brief was carried out on 3 December 2001.

4.2.2 The green is located at the north-eastern end of the golf course (Fig. 1) and is adjacent to pasture fields on the north and west, with scrub woodland copses to the east and north-west. It had recently been severely damaged by vandals who had spread a sodium chlorate-based weedkiller which had destroyed much of the turf and which had also leached to some extent into the underlying soil.

4.2.3 Approximately 900m² of the damaged turf was mechanically stripped, revealing the underlying layers of sand and sandy loam, up to 0.15m thick, which formed the make-up of the green. These deposits were removed mechanically exposing in places the natural clay subsoil, through which a number of narrow drainage gullies had previously been cut and filled with sand overlying quarried limestone fragments. No features of archaeological significance were identified and no artefacts recovered.

4.2.4 The new make-up for the green consisted of a layer of stone chippings ranging from 50mm to 100mm in diameter, beneath a layer of sand and loam which formed the base for the new green, as explained in para 4.1.

4.3 6th Green (SJ 2688 2263; pl 5-8)

4.3.1 The watching brief was carried out on 19 February 2002.

4.3.2 This sub-rectangular green is located on a south and south-west facing terrace some 40m north of the outer rampart and ditch of the hillfort at its northern end (Fig.1). To the north-east and east of the green are scrub-covered slopes.

4.3.3 Approximately 600m of turf was manually stripped revealing a light brown-coloured silty loam which had been imported to level-up the green above the surrounding ground surface at the time of its construction. Up to 0.2m of this layer was removed mechanically exposing narrow drainage gullies similar to those beneath the 4th green. Because excavation did not extend into the underlying clay subsoil, no archaeological features were exposed and no artefacts recovered.

4.3.4 As in the 4th green, a layer of stone chippings ranging from 50mm to 100mm in diameter, beneath a layer of sand and loam was deposited on the exposed loam surface to form the base for the new green.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief showed that the general make-up for both of the greens consists of a layer of sand and peat, deposited when the greens were last laid, above which the continual process of top-dressing has deposited a layer of sandy loam immediately beneath the turf and forming the base for turf layer itself.
- 5.2 The mechanical stripping of the turf and the removal of part of the underlying make-up did not extend beneath these modern deposits, although in part of the 4th Green the natural subsoil was exposed, but not disturbed. Consequently, no archaeological deposits were disturbed and no artefacts were recovered during the course of the work. The raising of the general level of the greens with stone and sand is likely to enhance the protection of any archaeological deposits which may lie beneath the greens.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Mr David Thomas, the Club Secretary, and to Mr Alan Lewis and the ground staff of Llanymynech Golf Club for their assistance and co-operation.

7 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: SPECIFICATION

LLANMYNECH GOLF CLUB 4th and 6th GREENS SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed works involve the removal and re-laying of turf on the 4th and 6th greens of Llanymynech Golf Course. The area lies within Llanymynech hillfort, a site scheduled as an archaeological monument of national importance which straddles the English/Welsh border.
- 1.2 The proposed works form part of an on-going scheme to improve the drainage on the greens, under which a number greens have so far been re-laid. The previous works, which were all in Wales, were undertaken according to Scheduled Monument Consent granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the National Assembly for Wales. A condition of consent was for an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during groundworks, this in each case being undertaken by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT).
- 1.3 CPAT has been approached by Llanymynech Golf Club to prepare a specification for undertaking an archaeological watching brief during the proposed groundworks, to be submitted in support of an application to English Heritage for Scheduled Monument Consent.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the watching brief are:
- 2.2 to undertake a watching brief on all groundworks within the scheduled area relating to the proposed removal and relaying of turf on the 4th and 6th greens, and to record any archaeological features revealed;
- 2.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 A watching brief will be maintained to monitor all related groundworks. All archaeological contexts will be recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section as appropriate, and photographed in 35mm format black and white negative and colour slide. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps where possible.
- 3.2 All archaeological artefacts and environmental samples will be 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.
- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared. This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Catalogue of sites identified with notes on their condition and significance, Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds. Further publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal will be undertaken at a later date and as considered appropriate depending on the nature of the findings.

- 3.4 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 watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Mr R.J. Silvester, 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 or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the watching brief.
- 4.3 The duration of the watching brief will depend entirely on the developers programme of work. The subsequent report will be prepared immediately following completion of on-site recording, 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. English Heritage 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.
- 4.6 CPAT is an IFA Registered Organisation and undertakes to abide by the *IFA Code of Conduct*.

N.W. Jones
Senior Project Archaeologist
18th April 2001

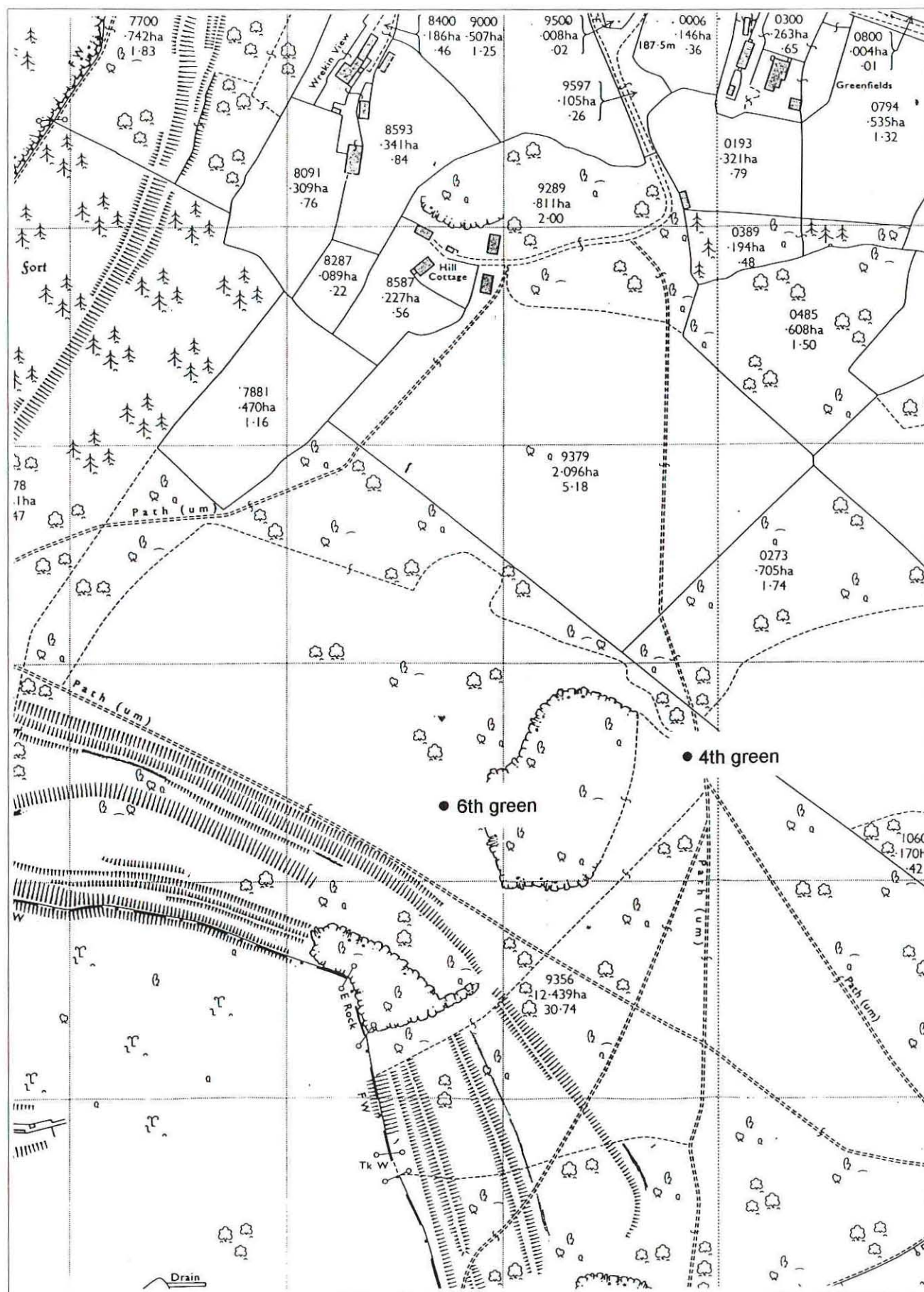


Fig. 1 Location of 4th and 6th Greens, 1:2,500



Plate 1 4th Green viewed from S. Photo CPAT 1131.15



Plate 2 4th Green during removal of sand and peat make-up from SE. Photo CPAT 1131.12



Plate 3 4th Green showing sand and peat make-up. Photo CPAT 1131.13



Plate 4 4th Green showing sand and peat make-up. Photo CPAT 1131.16



Plate 5 6th Green showing location in relation to hillfort defences from W. Photo CPAT 1151.24



Plate 6 6th Green showing the artificial terrace for the green. Photo CPAT 1151.18



Plate 7 6th Green showing location removal of turf make-up. Photo CPAT 1151.16



Plate 8 6th Green showing make-up below the turf. Photo CPAT 1151.14