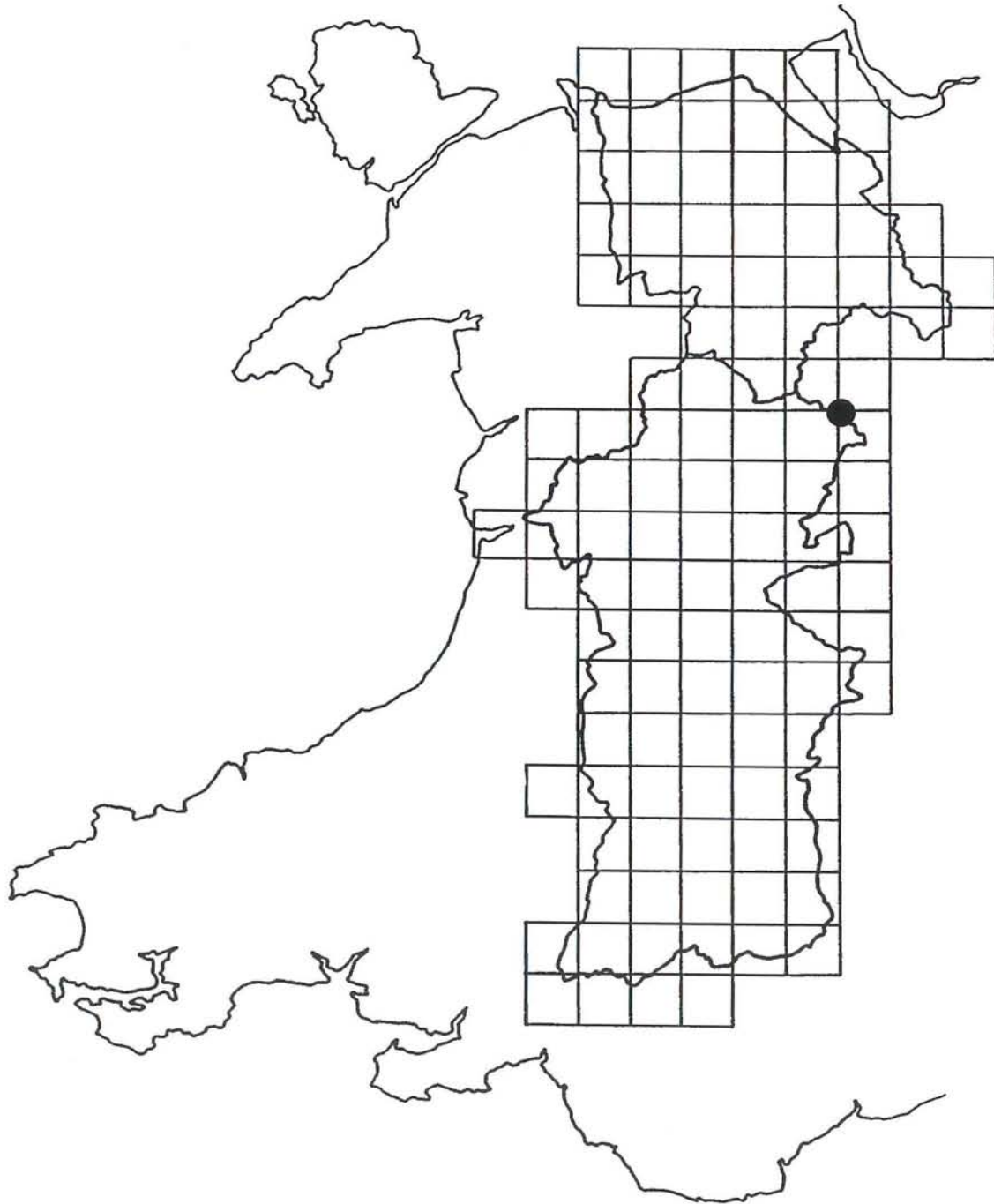


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Llanymynech Golf Course, Powys:
Archaeological investigations associ-
ated with construction work subject
*to SMC. **DRAFT REPORT***
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

by W.G.Owen
February 1996

Report prepared for Munro Associates

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APPENDIX 1: SPECIFICATIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In December 1995, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforth CPAT Contracts) was requested by Munro Associates, acting on behalf of their client Llanymynech Golf Club, to submit a quotation and specification for undertaking archaeological work at the site of a new machinery store and greenkeeper's office at Llanymynech Golf Course.

1.2 The development lies within Llanymynech Hillfort (fig. 1), which is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Mg 30). Scheduled Monument Consent for the works was granted by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, which was conditional on a specified archaeological response, which consisted of three stages:

Stage 1 The archaeological excavation of stantion pits on the northern side of the steel-framed building and a watching brief to monitor all other groundworks with the exception of the excavation of strip foundations.

Stage 2 The total archaeological excavation and recording of the area of the strip foundations.

Stage 3 Post-excavation research and preparation of a report.

1.3 CPAT Contracts were subsequently commissioned by the Llanymynech Golf Club to carry out the work. Stage 1 was completed in December 1995 and a modified version of Stage 2 in January 1996.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The archaeological background of Llanymynech hillfort has been previously summarised in the report on the archaeological evaluation work carried out in April 1995 and which preceded the granting of SMC for the present works (Thomas 1995). This report also concluded that, although no structural features of archaeological significance were revealed, artefacts of Iron Age date were recovered from a soil layer (Thomas 1995, context 6) which was interpreted as a possible old ground surface dating to this period. In addition, a flint core recovered from the topsoil layer suggested the strong possibility of prehistoric occupation nearby.

3 STAGE 1a: EXCAVATION OF STANTION PITS

3.1 Four stantion pits on the northern side of the building were excavated under Stage 1 of the Specification (fig. 2). In each case, the overburden, consisting of hardcore and rubble, was removed mechanically and subsequent excavation carried out manually.

3.2 Stantion Pit A (1.1 x 1.1m; Fig. 3)

3.2.1 Removal of the overburden (01) exposed a thin layer of grey clay (02) c. 0.04m thick, which extended across the surface of the pit at a depth of c. 0.35m below the present ground surface. A flint scraper of Neolithic or Early Bronze

Age origin was recovered from the interface of contexts 01 and 02. Below the clay layer, a brown clayey loam (03), which was interpreted as hillwash, extended down to the yellow-brown natural clay soil (04) at a depth of c. 0.85m. In the south-eastern corner of the stantion pit, context 04 was cut by part of a shallow pit (05), 0.25m deep, which extended beyond the limits of excavation. Apart from a small fragment of animal bone, no finds were recovered from this pit. A soil sample from context 05 was removed for possible analysis.

3.3 Stantion Pit B (1.0 x 1.0m; Fig. 4)

3.3.1 Removal of the concrete and hardcore overburden exposed a grey clay layer (06) similar in texture and thickness to layer 02 in Stantion Pit 1. Below this, a dark brown clayey loam layer (07), c. 0.15m thick merged at a depth of 0.50m into a layer (08) which was similar in colour and texture but contained charcoal flecks. This layer extended to yellow-brown natural clay at a depth of 0.70m, and was cut by a pit (09), 0.20m deep, which extended beyond the limits of excavation. Its fill (10) was similar to context 08 but contained more frequent charcoal flecks. No finds were recovered from Stantion Pit 2 but a sample of context 10 was removed for possible analysis.

3.4 Stantion Pit C (1.1 x 1.1m; Fig. 5)

3.4.1 Removal of the overburden exposed a loam soil (11), c. 0.15m thick which overlay a dark brown clay (12) c. 0.20m thick extending

to the yellow-brown natural clay at a depth of c. 0.50m. Both this layer and context 12 were truncated by a drainage channel (13), finds from which indicated that it was of modern origin. At the level of the natural clay this channel cut two elongated features (14) and (15) which were interpreted as ard or plough marks. The surface of the natural clay was also cut by a shallow, bowl-shaped pit (16) 0.20m deep. No finds were recovered from Stantion Pit 3 but a soil sample was removed from context 15 for possible analysis.

3.5 Stantion Pit D

3.5.1 The investigation revealed extensive modern disturbance and rubble deposits, with no archaeological features recorded or finds recovered from this pit.

4 STAGE 1b: WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 Following the excavation of the stantion pits on the northern side of the plot, a watching brief was maintained as the remaining six stantion post pits (Nos E-J) were excavated mechanically. As these were excavated, exposed soil surfaces were examined for archaeological features and the spoil examined for finds. After the pits were completely excavated, exposed surfaces were cleaned manually and, with the exception of Stantion Pit G whose position coincided with a concrete tank, a representative section was drawn.

4.2 Soils exposed in Stantion Pits E and F showed no signs of disturbance, the loam topsoil overlying a clean, yellowish-buff coloured silty clay subsoil with sandstone bedrock exposed in Stantion Pit F at a depth of 0.80m. No features of archaeological significance were visible.

4.3 Stantion Pits G, H and I were all disturbed by a modern pipe-trench to some extent but sufficient was exposed to demonstrate that they contained no archaeological features. Soils in Stantion Pits H and I contained abundant sandstone fragments probably derived from the rock face to the south of and overlooking the site and which may have been quarried in the past.

4.4 The silty clay subsoil in Stantion Pit I was severely truncated by hardcore overburden and, again, showed no archaeological features.

4.5 No finds other than material of recent date were recovered from any of the pits.

5 STAGE 2: EXCAVATION OF STRIP FOUNDATIONS

5.1 As a result of communications problems between Munro Associates and their building contractors, the strip foundations were excavated mechanically without archaeological supervision. CPAT

Contracts were only informed after the work had been carried out and were therefore unable to undertake the complete archaeological excavation and recording of the strip foundations as defined in Stage 3 of the specification.

5.2 Following instructions from Dr Sian Rees, CPAT Contracts were able to examine the foundation trenches and to clean and record one appropriate section between each of the stantion pits. Since most of the sections revealed little in the way of archaeological detail, only those with significant features are illustrated here.

5.3 Section C-D (Fig. 6)

5.3.1 Immediately below the hardcore layer (17) and c. 0.30m below the present ground surface, a layer of grey clay (18) was visible similar to the clay layers 02 and 06 identified in Stantion Pits 1 and 2. This extended for a distance of 3.25m from the eastern end of the trench and was truncated by a backfilled trench (19) which contained material of recent origin. Below layer 18, a brown silty clay (20) extended down to the natural yellow-buff coloured clay. At one point, the profile of a shallow pit (21) was visible. The base of the trench adjacent to this feature, when examined, showed this feature to be a gully 0.12m deep, which curved obliquely across the trench. No finds were recovered from it but a soil sample was taken for possible further examination.

5.4 Section D-E

5.4.1 The soil stratigraphy in this section consisted of a brown loam (22) c. 0.40m thick directly overlying apparently natural yellow-buff coloured stiff clay. A concentration of stone at the northern end of layer 22 indicated some disturbance probably of recent origin. No features or finds of archaeological interest were recorded.

5.5 Section E-F

5.5.1 The uppermost soil layer in this section (23) showed evidence of disturbance possibly associated to the construction of the adjacent water-storage tank and a pipe trench leading from this. Beneath this a thin layer of dark brown loam (24), c. 0.05m thick, probably represents a truncated topsoil layer. This overlay the natural undisturbed clay. No features or finds of archaeological significance were found.

5.6 Section F-G

5.6.1 This section showed a simple stratigraphy consisting of a disturbed brown loam (25), max. 0.40m thick, over a layer of silty clay (26) containing an abundance of fractured sandstone fragments which extended below the base of the trench. No features or finds of archaeological interest were noted.

5.7 Section G-H (Fig. 7)

5.7.1 The soil stratigraphy in this section was basically similar to that of Foundation Trench D consisting of a disturbed brown loam (27), max. 0.20m thick, over a silty clay (28) containing sandstone

fragments of increasing frequency with depth.

5.7.2 At one point a concentration of bone fragments were visible towards the base of the section and further fragments occurred across the base of the trench. The bone appeared to be located in the base of a feature (29), sealed beneath layer 27 and filled by a greyish-brown stony clay-loam (30). The feature was seen only in the exposed section and without further investigation, it was not possible to determine whether the bone was in a primary context, or redeposited within the feature, which produced no other artefacts. The bone fragments were removed for further examination, which revealed them to be human skeletal remains (see below). No other finds or features of archaeological interest were noted.

5.8 Section H-I

5.8.1 The stratigraphy of this section consisted entirely of sandstone fragments contained in a loose clayey silt matrix (31). As noted in Station Pit 9, this material is probably associated with the rock face to the south and overlooking the area. No finds or features were recorded.

5.9 Section I-J

5.9.1 The stratigraphy of this section consisted of modern hardcore overburden (32) overlying the natural buff-coloured clay. No features or finds were noted.

5.10 Section J-A

5.10.1 Modern overburden in this section overlay a brown clayey loam (33), max. 0.25m thick, which extended to the natural clay in the southern half of the trench. At the northern end of the trench, a layer of grey clay (34) c. 0.05m thick separated the overburden from the loam for a distance of 0.60m along the section. This appears to be a continuation of the similar layer recorded in Station Pit 1.

5.10.2 At one point, part of a pit (35), 0.20m wide, cut the natural clay to a depth of 0.12m. A concentration of stone visible in the section above this pit obscured any clearly defined edges to the pit that may have existed but the possibility that this pit may have been the base of a post-hole cannot be dismissed.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The excavation of the station pits revealed further evidence of prehistoric activity. The pits and possible ard-marks found in Station Pits 1, 2 and 3 occurred at the interface of the natural clay and soils which are interpreted as being equivalent to context 06 identified in the earlier evaluation report (op. cit.) and may, therefore, be prehistoric in date. This is possibly also true of features identified in Foundation Trenches A and H.

6.2 The flint scraper from Station Pit 1 was recovered from the interface of Layers 01 and 02, which is not regarded as a securely stratified context. However, it does support the conclusion made in the earlier evaluation report (op. cit.) that prehistoric occupation should be anticipated in this area.

6.3 The investigation of the strip foundation trenches also revealed significant archaeological evidence, consisting of two pits, one of which 25 fragments of bone.

6.4 A preliminary identification of the fragments of was undertaken by Sheelagh Stead, revealing that all but one fragment was human. The fragments were mostly from the cranium with two fragments of rib and one from the pelvis. The cranial fragments were worn post mortem, but are probably from an adult.

6.5 The recovery of these remains would strongly suggest that the remainder of the skeleton might still survive, although it remains uncertain whether it is a primary deposit within feature 29, or has been disturbed by it and redeposited within the fill. Consequently, at this stage it is not possible to clearly define the extent of the area which may contain further remains.

6.6 Since it was not possible to clearly determine the date of the remains, the Coroner was informed by CPAT on 31st January 1996, immediately following their identification as human.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPAT Contracts wishes to thank the staff of Llanymynech Golf Club for their help during the course of the excavation and watching brief. Thanks are also due to Sheelagh Stead for identifying the bone fragments.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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CONSTRUCTION OF A MACHINERY STORE AND GREENKEEPER'S ACCOMMODATION AT LLANYMYNECH GOLF COURSE

SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION BY CLWYD- POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

1.1 The proposed development of a block of land within the interior of Llanymynech Hillfort involves the excavation of foundations for the construction of a new building around an area of existing concrete floor.

1.2 This area lies within Llanymynech hillfort, a site scheduled by the Secretary of State for Wales as an archaeological monument of national importance (No.Mg30)

1.3 Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the Secretary of State for Wales have determined that an excavation and watching brief is necessary to record any archaeological features likely to be affected by the construction. Accordingly the works required have been made a condition of the granting of SMC for this project.

2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:

2.1.1 to reveal by means of excavation 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 trenches;

2.1.3 to undertake a watching brief on all groundworks within the scheduled area relating to this development and to interrupt those groundworks if necessary for up to half a day to record any archaeological features encountered;

2.1.4 to prepare a report outlining the results of the excavation and watching brief.

3 Methods

3.1 Stage one of the project will involve the excavation of the four stantion pits for the steel-framed building.

3.1.1 These will be excavated by machine to archaeological deposits previously identified in the evaluation (Thomas 1995) whereafter the excavation shall be by hand.

3.1.2 A watching brief will also be mounted to monitor all other groundworks, with the exception of the excavation of the strip foundations relating, to this project. Archaeological features noted during this watching brief will be fully investigated.

3.2 Stage two will involve the total excavation of the area of the strip foundations. The overburden will be removed by machine under the

supervision of archaeologically qualified personnel to archaeological deposits previously recognised in the evaluation (Thomas 1995) whereafter the excavation will be by hand.

3.2.1 all features encountered will be examined fully to fulfill the requirements of the SMC and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.

3.2.2 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, and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.

3.2.3 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved.

3.3 Stage 3 will involve the post excavation research and preparation of the report as required by the SMC (condition 6). This will involve the processing and study of all contexts, palaeoenvironmental samples and finds. 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 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 excavation 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 excavation.

4.3 It is anticipated that the excavation and watching brief will take no more than 8 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. Cadw 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
12th December 1995