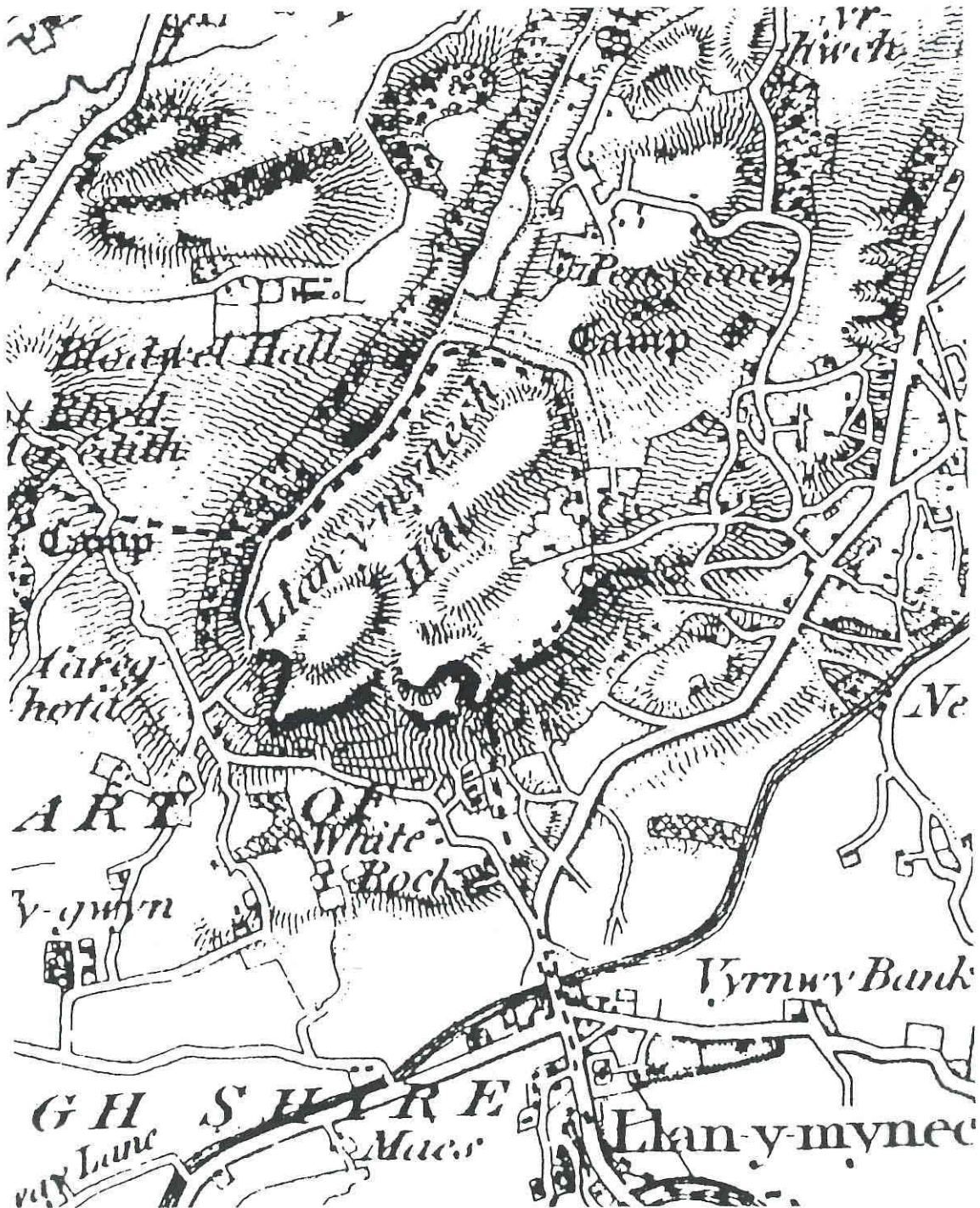


Relaying of Greens at Llanymynech Golf Club, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



CPAT Report No 410

**Relaying of Greens at Llanymynech
Golf Club, Powys**
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N W Jones and W G Owen
January 2001

Report for Llanymynech Golf Club

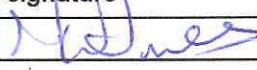



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Fig. 1 Location, 1:2,500

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The recent groundworks at Llanymynech Golf Club involved the relaying of six greens to improve the drainage. The greens lie within the area of Llanymynech Hillfort, scheduled as a monument of national importance (SAM Mg 30).
- 1.2 The Inspectorate of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, in their capacity as archaeological advisers to the National Assembly for Wales, had determined that an archaeological watching brief was necessary to record any archaeological features or finds revealed during the course of the works. The Committee of the Llanymynech Golf Club invited the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust to undertake the watching brief.

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 commonly 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 SJ 26602222. 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 (Fig. 1)

4.1 The archaeological watching brief was carried out separately for six greens between October 13 2000 and 26th January 2001. A full written, drawn and photographic record was maintained throughout. For all of the greens the turf was mechanically stripped and a layer of stone 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 3rd Green (SJ 26812246)

4.2.1 The watching brief was carried out on October 13th 2000.

4.2.2 The green, located at the north-eastern end of the golf course, is set on a level area at the end of a low south-east/north-west aligned ridge and overlooks slopes to the south, east and west. It lies close to the English border to the east which at that point follows a low, ruinous dry-stone wall, beyond which are areas of dense scrub woodland. Low banks representing the hillfort defences are visible to the east of the wall.

4.2.3 Approximately 300m² of turf up to 3cms deep was stripped exposing an 8cm-thick layer of a sandy-loam topdressing overlying a thin peat layer. No archaeological features were exposed or artefacts recovered.

4.3 9th Green (SJ 26422202)

4.3.1 The watching brief was carried out on January 5th, 2001.

4.3.2 The green is located on level ground and is overlooked by the steep slopes of the main ridge to the north and north-west.

4.3.3 Approximately 840m² of turf up to 3cm thick were removed, exposing a 3.5cm thick layer of sandy peat. No archaeological features were exposed and no artefacts recovered.

4.4 11th Green (SJ 26102176)

4.4.1 The watching brief was carried out on November 24th 2000.

4.4.2 The green is located on a terrace on the eastern flank of the main north-west/ south-east aligned ridge of Llanymynech Hill. To the south and south-west there is deciduous scrub woodland beyond which are the precipitous Asterley Rocks.

4.4.2 Approximately 900m² of turf up to 2cm thick was removed exposing the sandy peat sub-surface make-up of the green. No archaeological features were exposed and no artefacts recovered.

4.5 12th Green (SJ 26302211)

4.5.1 The watching brief was carried out on November 7th 2000.

4.5.2 The green is located on the main north-west south-east aligned ridge of Llanymynech Hill.

4.5.3 Turf, up to 2cm thick, was mechanically stripped from an area of c. 900m², exposing the sub-surface make-up of the green, composed of a layer of sandy peat. No features were revealed during the watching brief, and no artefacts were recovered.

4.6 17th Green (SJ 26242191)

4.6.1 The watching brief was carried out on December 8th 2000

4.6.2 The green is located on the main ridge of Llanymynech Hill approximately 40m north of the triangulation pillar on the highest point of the hill (225.48m OD). To the east of the green is a small deciduous scrub copse.

4.6.3 Turf, up to 2cm thick, was mechanically stripped from an area of c. 380m², exposing the sub-surface make-up of the green, composed of a layer of sandy peat. No features were revealed during the watching brief, and no artefacts were recovered.

4.7 18th Green

4.7.1 The watching brief was carried out on January 26th 2001

4.7.2 The 18th green is located towards the southern end of the hillfort (SJ 2657 2185), immediately to the east of the main limestone quarry. The natural ground surface slopes to the east while the area of the green has been heavily landscaped, with the south and east sides raised by up to 1.8m above the surrounding levels, although the west and north sides are much closer to natural levels. To the west and north-east of the green landscaping has created embankments up to c. 2m in height.

4.7.3 Turf, up to 3cm thick, was mechanically stripped from an area of c. 680m², exposing the sub-surface make-up of the green, composed of a layer of sand and peat. No features were revealed during the watching brief, and no artefacts were recovered.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The watching brief has demonstrated that the general make-up for each 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 turf layer itself.

5.2 The excavations on the 13th Green (Owen 1999) have previously demonstrated that the archaeological deposits may, in some instances, be within 0.16-0.30m of the surface, although it is clear that a number of the greens have been built up above the natural ground surface during landscaping. The mechanical stripping of the turf during the present phase of improvements has removed only a thin layer of the turf make-up and at no time has extended beneath the modern sand and peat base for the greens. Consequently, no archaeological deposits have been disturbed and no artefacts have been recovered from the areas investigated. The raising of the general level of the greens during the present work is likely to result in better protection for any archaeological deposits which may be buried 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.

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APPENDIX 1: SPECIFICATION

LLANMYNECH GOLF CLUB GREENS 3, 9, 11, 12, 17, & 18 SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed works involve the removal of turf on the 6 greens of Llanymynech Golf Course.
- 1.2 The area lies within Llanymynech hillfort, a site scheduled as an archaeological monument of national importance (SAM Mg30).
- 1.3 Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the National Assembly for Wales, have determined that an archaeological watching brief is necessary to record any archaeological features revealed during the course of the works, and this has been made a condition of the granting of scheduled monument consent (SMC) for this works.

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 this development and to record any archaeological features encountered;
- 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 groundworks relating, to this project. All archaeological contexts 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 monochrome negative and colour slide 35mm format. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps where possible.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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. 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.

N.W.Jones
Projects Officer
14th August 2000

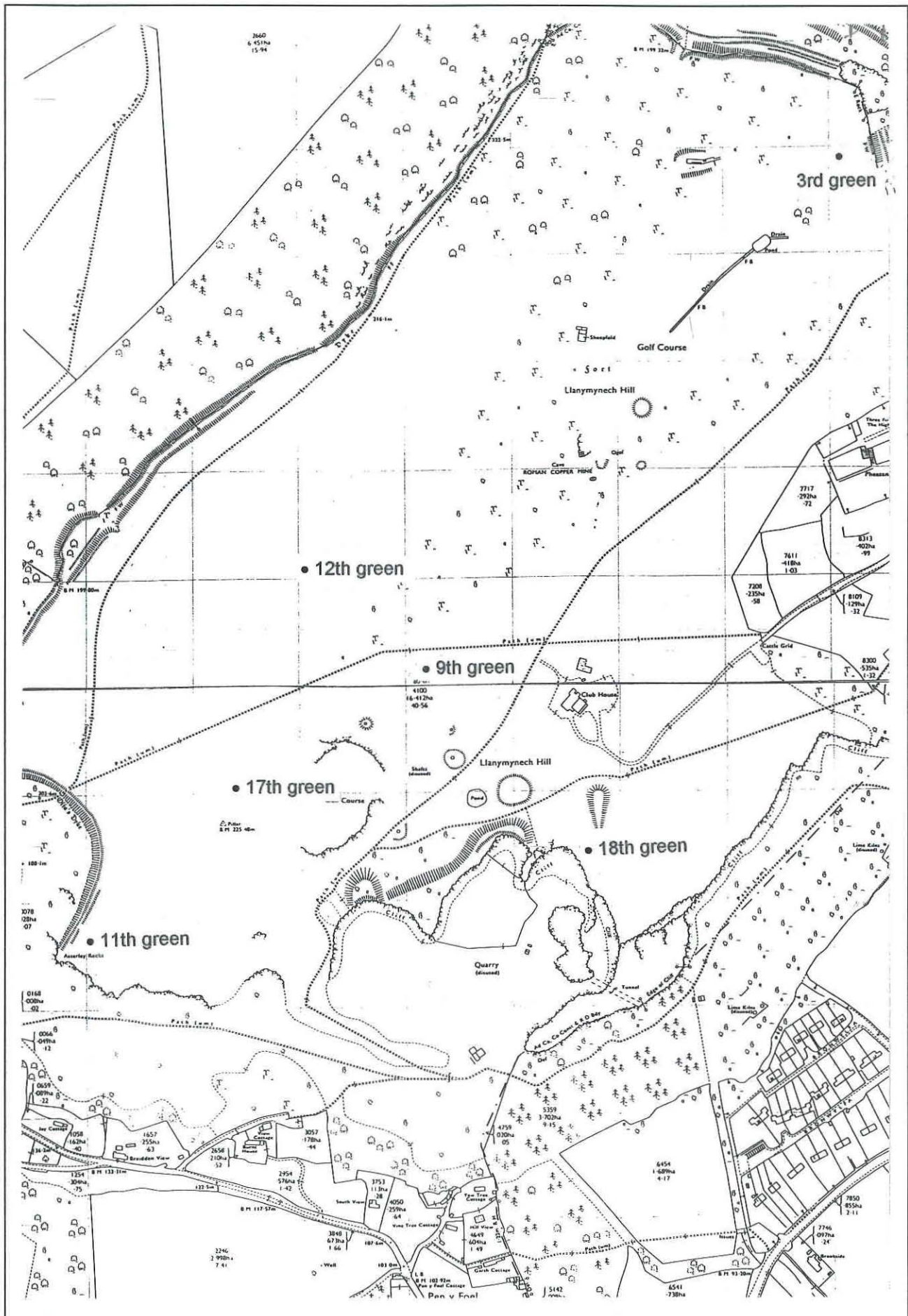


Fig. 1 Llanymynech Golf Course: location of greens



Plate 1 Turf stripping on the 18th green. Photo CPAT 1030.26



Plate 2 18th green showing relative ground levels and landscaping