

CPAT Report No. 1381

Glasdir, Ruthin, Denbighshire




Archaeological Evaluation



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Logan W, 2015. *Glasdir Ruthin, Denbighshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished report. CPAT No. 1381

Cover photo: View from the west across the study area. CPAT 4091-0004



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Summary

The Field Services section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation in October 2015 on land at Glasdir, Ruthin (SJ 11475 860), on behalf of GroundSolve Ltd, in relation to a potential development proposal.

The evaluation followed a programme of archaeological geophysical survey on the site which identified a number of features of possible archaeological significance, including a semi-circular anomaly thought to potentially represent the remains of a Bronze Age burial mound.

The excavation of a trench across the anomaly revealed a shallow but well defined curvilinear ditch, although with no artefactual evidence to confirm its date. Despite the lack of dating evidence the results appear to confirm the initial interpretation of the feature.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned by GroundSolve Ltd to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at Glasdir, Ruthin in Denbighshire. The evaluation was carried out on the 22nd and 23rd of October 2015.
- 1.2. The study area comprised open farmland located to the east of the farm centred on SJ 1162 5864, located on the outskirts of Ruthin, to the east of the roundabout forming the junction of the A525 Ruthin North Link Road and Denbigh Road.



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Fig. 1. Site location plan.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Historical mapping depicts the study area as part of the northern extent of a larger field, which was subdivided during the 1960s. The farm, located to the west of the site was built post 1938.
- 2.2. The analysis of aerial photographic sources as part of an assessment carried out for a nearby housing scheme during the early 2000s revealed a number of circular cropmarks within the study area. Based on this initial assessment these were tentatively identified as prehistoric barrows. Subsequently, a geophysical survey was carried out on the site, followed by an archaeological evaluation. The features evaluated during this project were found to be largely mid to late post medieval in date and associated with agricultural land usage. A rectangular concrete pad forming

the base for a World War 2 searchlight battery was also revealed during this phase of the work (Grant and Grant, 2003).

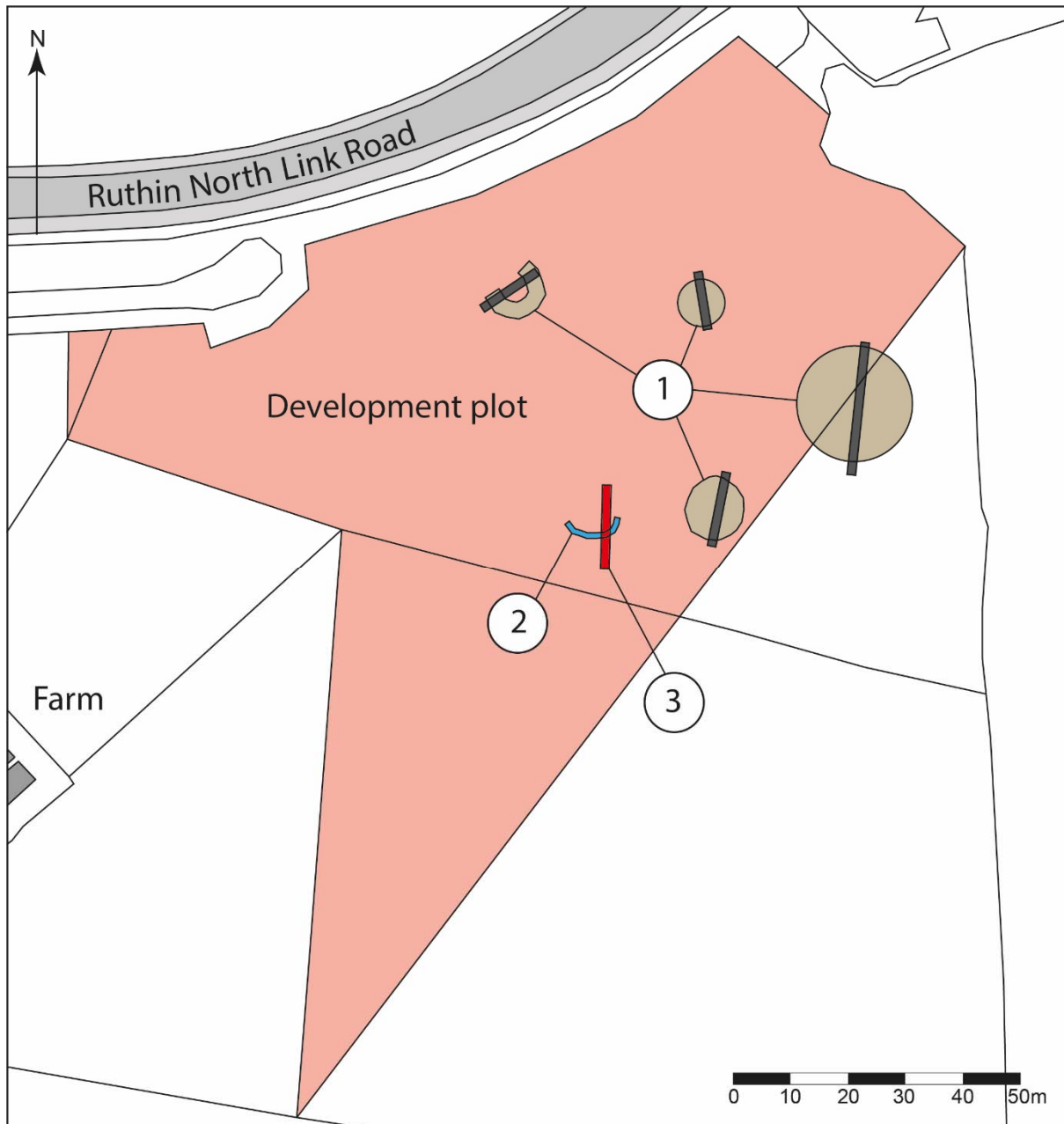


Fig. 2. Trench plan showing proposed development area (light red), geophysical anomalies evaluated in 2003 and trench locations (1), geophysical anomaly identified in 2015 (2) and location of 2015 evaluation trench (3).

3 Evaluation

- 3.1. A single trench measuring approximately 15m by 1.5m was positioned to investigate a sub-circular anomaly revealed in the 2015 geophysical survey. Nine stratigraphic units were identified.
- 3.2. The topsoil comprised a firm, mid brown stony silt (001) extending across the entire excavated area to a thickness of 0.15m. 18th- and 19th-century pottery and clay pipe was recovered from this deposit, and also from the underlying deposit (002) a moderately stony mid brown silt containing lime flecking, extending trench wide to 0.11m in thickness. Underlying (002) towards the north end of the trench a shallow, poorly-defined pit [009] was revealed which contained an animal burial (008).
- 3.3. Underlying (002) and cut by [009] was a sterile compact light brown silt and gravel subsoil deposit (003), extending trench wide to a thickness of 0.11m.
- 3.4. Removal of the subsoil revealed a ditch cut [007], broadly oriented east west but perceptibly curving to the north-east. The profile was well-defined with steep sides and a flat base sloping to the south. It extended 1m in width and 0.36m deep. The single fill (006) comprised a moderately compacted greyish silt with moderate pebbles. No finds or organic inclusions were recovered from the ditch fill.



Fig. 3. CPAT 4091-0005 View from the east of ditch [007] showing natural gravels to the south (004) and redeposited material to the north (005)



Fig. 4. CPAT 4091-0012 View from the west of ditch [007]

- 3.5. The south side and the base of the ditch cut a well compacted light brown gravelly silt natural deposit (004). However, the north side of the ditch cut a much less compacted siltier deposit (005), underlying the subsoil and overlying the natural. No finds or organic material was visible in this deposit which extended >9m by 0.24m.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The evaluation identified two broad phases of activity within the excavated area.

Possible Prehistoric activity

- 4.2. The evaluation identified a curvilinear ditch [007] which corresponded with the feature identified by the geophysical survey, having a projected diameter of around 10m. It seems most likely that this formed the ditch surrounding a small Bronze Age round barrow. The evaluation trench was positioned east of the centre and consequently was unable to confirm the presence of a central burial.
- 4.3. The exterior of the ditch was cut through the gravelly subsoil which was evidence across most of the trench. The internal edge, however, had been cut through an undated silty deposit (005), which could be associated with earlier activity or may have been a variation in the natural subsoil.

Post-medieval agricultural usage

- 4.4. As might be expected, pottery and clay pipe recovered from upper deposits attests cultivation during the 18th and 19th century and were probably derived from manuring of the field. A shallow pit [009] was revealed underlying the ploughsoil and cutting the subsoil, which contained the skeleton of a sheep (*Ovis Aries*) or goat (*Capra aegagrus hircus*).

5 Acknowledgements

- 5.1. CPAT would like to thank Elgan Williams of Groundsolve Ltd for his assistance on this project. Fieldwork was carried out by Will Logan and Ian Grant.

6 Sources

Grant, I and Grant, F, 2003. *Land at Glasdir Ruthin Denbighshire: Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished report. CPAT No. 581

Roseveare, M and Lewis, D, 2015. *Land at Glasdir Ruthin Denbighshire: Geophysical Survey Report*. Unpublished report. Archaeophysica Ltd Grd 151

Cartographic Sources

1875 Ordnance Survey County Series: Denbighshire

1900 Ordnance Survey County Series: Denbighshire

1938-1953 Ordnance Survey County Series: Denbighshire

1963 Ordnance Survey Plan

1969 Ordnance Survey Plan

7 Archive deposition Statement

- 7.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the ClfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The project archive will be

deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record, maintained by CPAT in Welshpool. A summary of the archive is provided in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1: Site Archive

- 1 Trench Recording Sheet
- 1 A1 permatrace drawing
- 12 digital photographs CPAT film No 4091

Appendix 2: CPAT WSI 1622

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited Mr Adam Latimer of Ian Farmer Associates, to submit a proposal for undertaking an archaeological evaluation in connection with a proposed development on land at Glasdir, Ruthin. The land is currently used for agricultural pasture. The proposal concerns the possible erection of a school on the site.
- 1.2 The work follows a recent programme of archaeological geophysics (Roseveare and Lewis 2015) on the site of the proposed development, which identified a number of anomalies, one of which was thought to potentially represent the remains of a Bronze Age burial mound. Denbighshire Archaeology Service, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local authority, have determined that an archaeological evaluation of the anomaly is required to discover the depth, extent and nature of any archaeology present. Accordingly, a brief has been prepared by Denbighshire Archaeology Service which details the works required.
- 1.3 The plot is located on the outskirts of Ruthin, to the east of the roundabout forming the junction of the A525 Ruthin North Link Road and Denbigh Road (NGR SJ11475860).

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the potential cultural heritage feature identified by the geophysics in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeological features identified during the evaluation;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the evaluation;
 - 2.1.4 to prepare a final publication of the results in an appropriate regional or national journal, depending on the nature and significance of any archaeology.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The evaluation will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (2014).

Trial trenching

- 3.2 The evaluation will comprise one trench, measuring approximately 1.5m in width and 15m in length, positioned parallel to the adjacent field boundary and crossing the location of the geophysical anomaly. The size and positioning of the trench has been approved by the Curator.

- 3.3 The trench will be excavated initially using a machine fitted with a wide toothless ditching blade. All modern overburden will be removed down to the level of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. The base and at least one complete section of each trench will be manually cleaned and appropriately recorded. The evaluation will be essentially non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survive, together with their nature condition and significance. The depth of natural deposits will be determined to assess the extent of any stratified deposits which may be encountered.
- 3.4 It has been assumed that the area in question has sufficient access for a mechanical excavator via existing gateways; the provision of the machine will be the responsibility of the client. Any variation from this may impact on the overall charges. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion. No provision has been made for site security/fencing during the excavation, if required this will be the responsibility of the client.
- 3.5 Contexts will be recorded on record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in digital format to a minimum resolution of 8 mega pixels. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to buildings and boundaries identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps and levels will be related to Ordnance Datum where possible, with the use of total station surveying.
- 3.6 All artefacts will be related to the contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff. Provision has been included for sampling deposits for dating, environmental and technological evidence as appropriate.
- 3.7 Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location, topography and geology
 - Archaeological Background
 - Evaluation
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 3.8 The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (MoRPHE) system and the *CifA Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014), to be deposited with the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER). Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The assessment will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Dr R J Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their Code of Conduct (2014) and the Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology (2014).
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the assessment.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the trial excavation will be completed within one to three working days with a team of two archaeologists, and the report prepared immediately thereafter. The timing of the excavation will be determined in consultation with the client at a future date, in order that the machine used for the geotechnical study can be used to open the evaluation trench.
- 4.4 The client is advised that should significant archaeological remains or artefacts be revealed additional services may be required for which a contingency should be allowed, as mentioned in the Curatorial Brief. The need for such contingencies, and their scope and potential cost, would be subject to discussions between CPAT, the client and the curator once the fieldwork has been completed. The following figures are therefore only for guidance and the final cost, should any further services be required, may be more or less than the following figures which are included to provide an indication of the types of additional services and indicative costs which might be required.

Curatorial monitoring	no extra charge
Finds conservation etc	£285 per day
Finds specialist	£265 per day
Dating	£320 per date
Environmental specialist	£285 per day
Charcoal identification	£50 per sample
Museum deposition and storage	no extra charge
Interim Publication	Archaeology in Wales at no additional charge

- 4.5 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.6 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

R Hankinson

7 October 2015

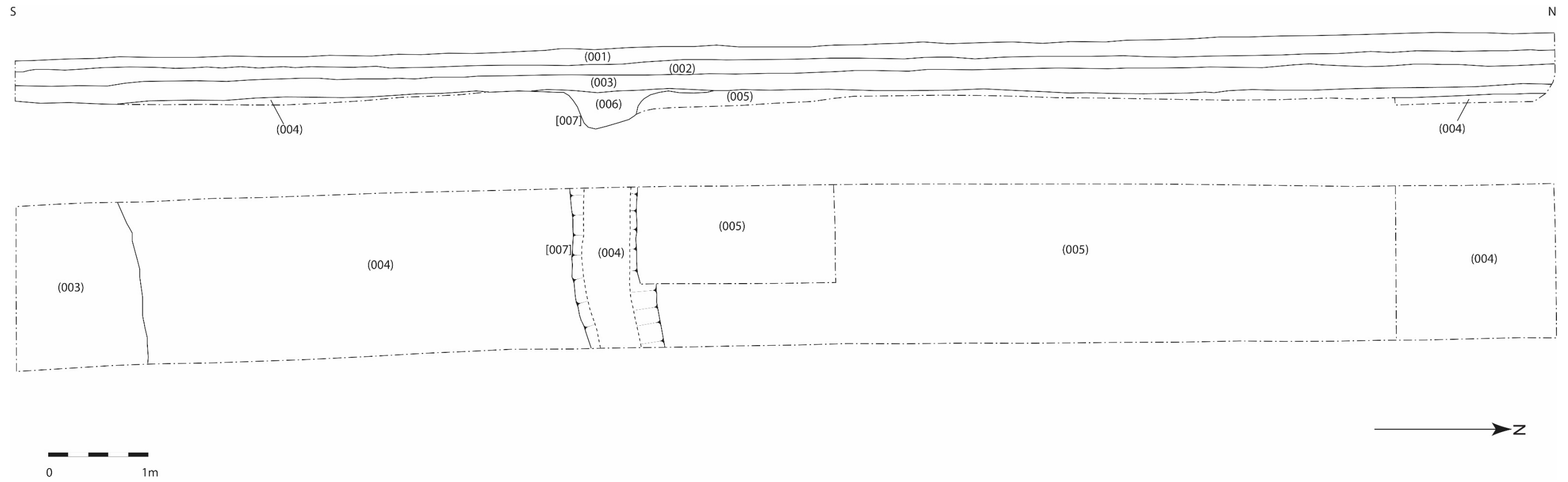


Fig. 5. Plan and east-facing section of evaluation trench