

Composting Toilet Installation, Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin, Ceredigion

Watching Brief Report

Ross Cook

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Acknowledgements

With thanks to Karen Phillips for commissioning this programme of archaeological.

Abbreviations used in this report

HER	- Historic Environment Record.
DAT-DM	- Dyfed Archaeological Trust Development Management.
LPA	- Local Planning Authority.
NGR	- National Grid Reference.
NMR	- National Monuments Record.
OS	- Ordnance Survey.

All other abbreviations will be referred to in text.

Project Team

Ross Cook – A buildings archaeologist and dendrochronologist with a background in archaeology and buildings conservation. He has undertaken archaeological fieldwork throughout Wales and England, where he has also worked to produce detailed surveys of a wide range of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings; this has included Neath Abbey, Llansteffan Castle, Tretower Castle, Cilgerran Castle, Newport Castle Pembrokeshire, Picton Castle, and Brymbo Ironworks. Ross is the Cathedral Archaeologist at St Davids Cathedral, Pembrokeshire. He previously worked for the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales as a Historic Buildings Investigator (Archaeology), where he recorded buildings and Monuments, and provided advice on historic buildings at a national level. Currently he is involved in project work with Cadw, The Brymbo Heritage Group, and The Buildings of Medieval and Ottoman Palestine Research Project.

Ross also works as an Associate Dendrochronologist with the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, through which he has undertaken work on sites such as Hampton Court Palace, Winchester Cathedral, Queens House Greenwich, The Tower of London, Christ Church and Magdalen College Oxford, Llwyn Celyn (Mons), and a large number of other smaller listed buildings and scheduled sites throughout Wales and England.

ArchaeoDomus Archaeological & Heritage Services is the trading name of Ross Cook, an affiliate member of the CifA, adhering to the CifA codes of conduct.

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PGCert. Social Anthropology – University of Wales, Lampeter

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Composting Toilet Installation, Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin

Watching Brief Report

Summary

ArchaeoDomus Archaeological & Heritage Services was commissioned by Karen Phillips to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation and undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief at Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin. The aim of this work has been to allow development whilst monitoring for any potential archaeological resource.

The plans propose the construction of a composting toilet, with associated service trench and soakaways. Faculty was granted by the Diocesan Advisory Committee on 10th May 2020, under DAC application number 2021-006139.

Fieldwork was commenced on 9th December 2021 and concluded the same day.

The watching brief demonstrated that the churchyard was landscaped when the church was rebuilt in 1878. This raised the level across the graveyard by a minimum of 0.31m. No articulate or disarticulated human remains, or further archaeological features or remains were present in the development area.

Compostio Instalation Toiled, Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin

Bugeilio archaeolegol

Crynodeb

Comisiynwyd Gwasanaethau Archeolegol & Threftadaeth ArchaeDomus gan Karen Phillips i baratoi Cynllun Ymchwilio Ygrifenedig ac i ymgymryd Briff Gwyllo Archeolegol at Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin. Nod y gwaith hun oedd caniatáu datblygiad wrth fonitro am unrhyw adnodd archeolegol posibl.

Mae'r cynlluniau'n cynnig adeiladu toiled compostio, gyda ffos gwasanaeth a suddfanau dŵr cysylltiedig. Rhoddwyd cyfadran gan Bwyllgor Cynghori'r Esgobaeth ar 10fed Mai 2020, o dan rif cais DAC 2021-006139.

Dechreuwyd ar waith maes ar 9fed Rhagfyr 2021 a gorffenwyd ar yr un diwrnod.

Dangosodd y brîff gwyllo bod y fynwent wedi'i thirlunio pan ailadeiladwyd yr eglwys ym 1878. Cododd hyn y lefel ar draws y fynwent i o leiaf 0.31m.

Nid oedd unrhyw weddillion dynol cymalog neu ddiuedd, na nodweddion neu olion archeolegol pellach yn bresennol yn yr ardal ddatblygiad.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 ArchaeoDomus was commissioned to undertake an archaeological programme of works during works associated with the installation of a composting toilet at Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin, Ceredigion (hereafter also referred to as ‘the site’). This work included a Written Scheme of Investigation (ArchaeoDomus 2021) and an Archaeological Watching Brief. This project has been commissioned by Karen Phillips, on behalf of the church and congregation of Llanychaearn.



Fig. 1 – Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin.

- 1.1.2 Faculty was granted on 10th May 2020 by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the *erection of a free standing, wooden compost eco-toilet (6'x8')* to the rear of the church in the churchyard immediately adjacent the church under application number **2021-006139**. The proposed works provide a new platform for the composting toilet, and provision of a urine, and rain water soakaway. The DAC Archaeological Adviser, Zoe Bevans-Rice, assessed there to be the potential to encounter archaeological deposits, and recommended a Written Scheme of Investigation be prepared to set out the methodology for an archaeological watching brief. The advice states:

This application will need archaeological mitigation. The original church site is at least medieval in date and the proposed ground works are fairly substantial in archaeological terms, leading to the potential destruction of buried archaeological deposits. When the details are submitted as a faculty application my recommendation is likely to be that an archaeological condition be attached

to the faculty. This will require a qualified and competent archaeologist to carry out an archaeological watching brief during all ground disturbance work. This watching brief is a standard form of archaeological mitigation which should be governed by a written scheme of investigation (WSI). This WSI document essentially acts as a scheme of work and sets out the methodology of the watching brief. This must be prepared by a qualified and competent archaeologist in accordance with CIfA standards and guidance (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists).

- 1.1.3 A planning application was also made to the Local Planning Authority, Ceredigion County Council, and has been lodged under planning number is **A190646**. The full planning was given on 3rd March 2020. The application is available on request from the authority.
- 1.1.4 The fieldwork was commenced and concluded on 9th December 2021. It was undertaken in accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ArchaeoDomus 2021) and in line with the guidance laid down by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, *CIfA Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (December 2014).
- 1.1.5 All work was undertaken by a qualified archaeologist.
- 1.1.6 This report documents the results of the Watching Brief.

2 SITE AND LOCATION

2.1 General

2.1.1 Eglwys Llanychaearn is located to the south-west of the village of Rhydyfelin, in the county of Ceredigion. The churchyard sits in a wedge of land between the Afon Ystwyth to the east and an unnamed road to the north, which provides access from the A487. To the south of the churchyard is a large, open field. The church has a detached graveyard, which is located 75m to the north. The Cardigan Bay is 1.3km to the west. The site sits at circa 16m above sea level and is centred around NGR SN 58490 78608 / 52°23'14"N 004°04'51"W / What3Words balancing.cave.windmill.

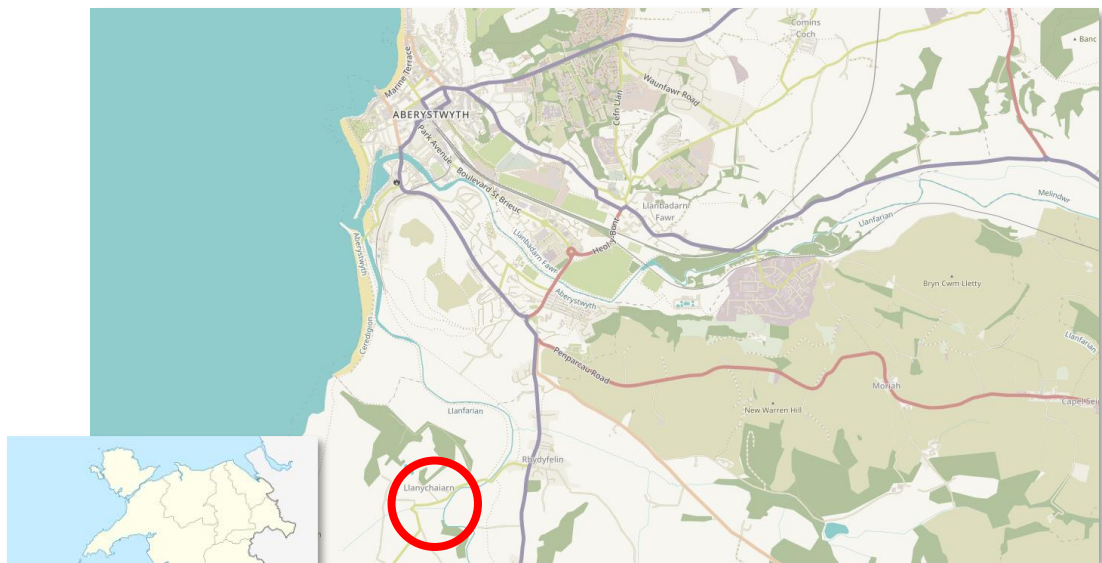


Fig. 2 – Location – Eglwys Llanychaearn.
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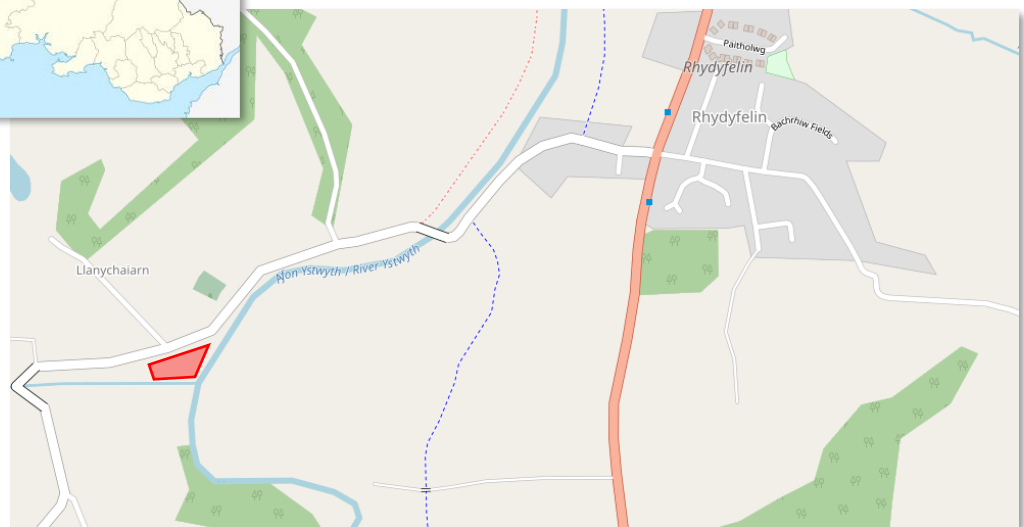


Fig. 3 – Location – Development Area (red).
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2.2 Geology

- 2.2.1 The underlying geology is formed of a mudstone and sandstone formation known as the Trefechan Formation (BGS) with Till, Devensian – Diamicton superficial deposits recorded (BGS). The local soil type is a freely draining, slightly acidic loamy soil (UKSO), classified as a Cambisols (UKSO).

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This WSI uses a HER search radius of 500m to identify sites of archaeological and historical importance. The search showed there to be 3 Listed Buildings and 1 Scheduled Monument.

3.1.2 This history uses readily available online and written sources.

3.2 Previous Archaeological Events

3.2.1 In 2004, a Tir Gofal Farm Visit was made to Brynlllys by Cambria Archaeological Projects (PRN 49901).

3.3 Designated Sites, Structures and Buildings

3.3.1 Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings within 500m radius.

3.3.2 SAMs

Tan-y-Castell – ID CD096

3.3.3 Listed Buildings

Gate Piers to Bryneithyn Hall – ID 82500

Garden Walls and Gazebo to Bryneithyn Hall – ID 82519

Tanycastell Farmhouse – ID 82513

3.4 Archaeology and History

3.4.1 Historically, the village of Rhydyfelin sits in the parish of Llanbadarn, in the Archdeaconry of Ceredigion and within the Diocese of St Davids. The site is located within the medieval Welsh Commote of Creuddyn and Cantref of Penweddig.

3.4.2 The narrative below seeks to document the known history of the area by drawing from the Regional HER and NMRW.

3.5 Prehistoric

3.5.1 No prehistoric sites were identified within the search area.

3.6 Roman

3.6.1 No Roman sites were identified within the search area.

3.7 Early Medieval

3.7.1 No early medieval sites were identified within the search area.

3.8 Medieval

3.8.1 During this period, the site of Eglwys Llanychaearn was founded in dedication to the Welsh saint Hychan, and consisted of a nave, chancel, and porch. Initially it served as a chapelry to Rectory of Llanbadarn Fawr in the Deanery of Ultra-Aeron and became the parish church in the post-medieval period. The chapelry was probably of Welsh foundation and established in the 12th or 13th centuries when Ceredigion remained mostly in Welsh hands.

3.9 Post-Medieval

3.9.1 By 1833, the Llanychaearn was established as a parish church, but was still supported in its maintenance by parishioners of Llanbadarn Fawr. In the same year, the porch was noted to be a fine example of Early English architecture. The medieval church and its porch are shown on the Tithe Map of 1845.

3.9.2 The church was fell into a state of disrepair during the 19th century and was rebuilt in 1878 to the designs of Archibald Richie. The new church was built on the location of its predecessor and included a vestry and organ chamber.

3.9.3 The church was the place of worship for the Richardes family. The Richardes family members held several notable positions, including a Colonel of the ‘Honourable East India Company’, a Royal Artillery man during the Waterloo Campaign, and a magistrate of the ‘Empress of India’ during and after the Indian Rebellion (often Sepoy Mutiny or First War of Independence) of 1857 in Paniput and Dehli. A memorial to the family is affixed to the north wall of the nave.

3.9.4 The Ordnance Survey First and Second Edition 25-inch maps (1888 and 1905) show the church after it was rebuilt in 1878.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Watching Brief

4.1.1 The aims of the Watching Brief, as defined by the CIfA (2008; revision 2011), are:

‘To allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during the proposed groundworks within the application area.

To provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard.’

4.1.2 The aims of the watching brief are to identify and record any potential archaeological remains or deposits during groundworks on site.

4.1.3 To record and identify any unknown archaeological finds, deposits, features or remains disturbed by groundworks.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 To communicate the results of the archaeological investigation to the client in the form of an illustrated report, and to provide digital copies to Diocesan Archaeological Adviser, Regional HER and the NMRW.

4.2.2 To prepare a digital archive of the projects report, photographic archive, all drawn elements for deposition with the National Monuments Record of Wales and Regional HER held by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

4.2.3 To safely store all material finds in a secure location on site for future detailed recording and analysis, and specialist reporting.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 All archaeological works have been conducted by a qualified archaeologist in accordance with the methodology set out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (ArchaeoDomus 2021) and in accordance with the *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (November 2014) from the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

5.2 Watching Brief

5.2.1 The areas observed during the watching brief were as follows:

- ❖ Excavation of service trenches.
- ❖ Excavation of urine and rainwater soakaways.

5.2.2 All excavations were undertaken by 360° tracked excavator or by hand, under constant archaeological supervision. The ground level was reduced to the archaeological horizon or the natural geological substrate. The generated spoil was visually inspected to maximise the recovery of disarticulate human remains and archaeological artefacts.

5.2.3 Areas of potential archaeological features were manually cleaned to prove their presence or absence.

5.2.4 Small finds were collected and bagged in relation to their context. Unstratified small finds were recorded and will be stored with the site archive, unless otherwise specified.

5.2.5 A general photographic record was made using a Canon 760D 24-megapixel or Google Pixel 5 12-megapixel camera, with ranging rods used where required.

5.2.6 The physical archive for the site is held by ArchaeoDomus.

5.3 Recording

5.3.1 Areas of excavation were recorded lidar equipped camera sensor, attached to an iPad, to produce measurable 3D point cloud, from which the trench plan was drawn.

5.3.2 A digital photographic record was maintained throughout with a Canon 760D 24-megapixel or Google Pixel 5 12-megapixel camera. 2 x 1m ranging rods or smaller photo scales were used for scale where appropriate.

5.3.3 All photographs have been named using the project code, in this instance AD111, which are followed by a reference and number. Where applicable, the following reference codes have been used:

- ❖ WB – Watching Brief
- ❖ FN – Find Number

5.3.4 All photographs in this report are watermarked with the photograph's name, code and number.

5.3.5 Finds will be recorded and stored with the site archive, unless otherwise specified.

5.4 Reinstatement

5.4.1 Once services have been laid, the remaining topsoil will be used to backfill the service trenches and to create a level parking area. Remaining soil will be carted away.

5.5 Documentary Research

5.5.1 Documentary research was undertaken using readily available resources with additional research aided by map regression and Tithe Map searches. Historic trade directories were used to help establish a timeline of events for the building. Further research was undertaken using unpublished and published sources.

5.6 Reporting

5.6.1 This report has been written and compiled by Ross Cook, according to the guidance laid down in the CIfA's *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2011).

5.6.2 This report has been written in Microsoft Word 2016 and uses Adobe Garamond Pro as its typeface.

5.7 Health and Safety

5.7.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* and *Health and Safety Advice in Archaeology* (BAJR 2005).

6 FIELDWORK RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The watching brief was commenced on 9th December 2021 and concluded the same day.

6.1.2 In this section, the results of the Watching Brief are presented. The extent of the excavations is shown in **Appendix II**, and the photographic archive in **Appendix III**.

6.1.3 The groundworks included:

- ❖ Excavation of service trenches.
- ❖ Excavation of urine and rainwater soakaways.

6.1.4 All excavations were undertaken by a 360° tracked excavator, with toothless bucket.

6.1.5 Excavations were monitored by a qualified archaeologist during groundworks associated with development and monitored for archaeological deposits and features.

6.2 Stratigraphy

6.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence for the site is presented in **Appendix IV**.

6.2.2 The stratigraphy within the development area was natural, with some plough disturbance.

6.3 Archaeological Result

6.3.1 The Watching Brief was undertaken on 9th December 2021 and monitored all groundworks associated with the development.

6.3.2 Context numbers have been attributed to the stratigraphic sequence, which are described in **Appendix IV**.

6.4 Trench 1: Service Trench (Plates 1-2)

6.4.1 Trench 1 extends on a western orientation from the southwest corner of the church, before turning south-southwest to run between the rows of graves. The area of excavation is presented in **Appendix 1**.

6.4.2 Excavations began with the removal of turf and humus (101) which revealed levelling material (104), both of which extends across the excavated area. A small area of tarmac path [102] was lifted, which had a sub-base of gravel and sand (103). To the south-west corner of the church, beneath a shallow patch of (104), the substantial footings [105] of the 19th century church were uncovered. To the west of the footings, a small area of cobbles [106] was uncovered. Further to the west, the kerb stones of a grave [107] were revealed, which sat on a historic ground surface (108). Within, and surrounded by, a deeper deposit of (104), was a deposit of grey clay (109).

6.4.3 *No further archaeological materials or deposits were identified.*

6.5 Finds

6.5.1 No articulate or disarticulate human remains, or small finds were recovered from the excavated material.

6.5.2 *No archaeological finds were observed or recovered during the Watching Brief.*

6.6 Environmental

6.6.1 *No environmental deposits for sampling were identified during the Watching Brief.*

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The watching brief demonstrated that when the church was rebuilt in 1878, a significant amount of work was also undertaken in the churchyard. This work used imported material, and likely used material excavated for the new church's footings, to level and landscape the churchyard. This appears to have raised the level throughout the churchyard. The clearest evidence for this work, not only through the deposited material, is the grave of Edward George Smith. His gravestone now sits comfortably at ground level, but the kerbstones marking out the plot now sit within a surface 0.30m below the current. Whilst the date for the releveling must coincide with the 1878 rebuilding, the date of Edward's grave, 1872, provides a *terminus post quem* for the event, and fits neatly with the known developments at Eglwys Llanychaearn.
- 7.2 The complete lack of any disarticulate human remains is highly unusual in a churchyard of this age and demonstrates further that the excavations were digging through made up ground of imported material.
- 7.3 The substantial footings of the new church of 1878 suggest that most of the earlier church was likely swept away during this time, apart from the vault under the chancel.
- 7.4 The small area of cobbles and paving, covered by a thin turf capping, belongs to the 1878 works and sit into the imported levelling material seen across the site. The cobbles probably come from the river flowing just to the southeast the church, or one of the nearby beaches. The path was truncated by a later grave.
- 7.5 *No further mitigation for the historic environment is recommended.*

8 ARCHIVING

- 8.1 The results of the Watching Brief are this written report, interpreted survey, and photographic archive. The final report and site archive will be held by ArchaeoDomus. The digital report will be deposited with the regional HER and the NMR. A PDF copy of the report will be made available from www.archaeodomus.co.uk.
- 8.2 The small finds archive will be held by ArchaeoDomus, with the site archive and a copy of this report.

9 SOURCES

9.1 Written Sources

- 9.1.1 CIFA, 2014, *Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*.
- 9.1.2 **Welsh Government**, 2017, *Planning Policy Wales; Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment*. Crown Copyright.
- 9.1.3 CIFA, 2007, *Archaeological Archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*
- 9.1.4 **Historic England**, 2011, *Environmental Archaeology; A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recover to post-excavation*

9.2 Online Sources

- 9.2.1 **British Geological Survey**
Accessed: May 2021
www.bsg.ac.uk
- 9.2.2 **UK Soil Observatory**
Accessed: May 2021
www.ukso.org.uk
- 9.2.3 **Welsh Tithe Maps**
Accessed: May 2021

places.library.wales

9.3 Maps

9.3.1 1905 OS 25 Inch to One Mile Map First Edition – Ceredigion

9.3.2 1972 OS 1:25000 Map Second Edition – Ceredigion

APPENDIX I

Historic Mapping

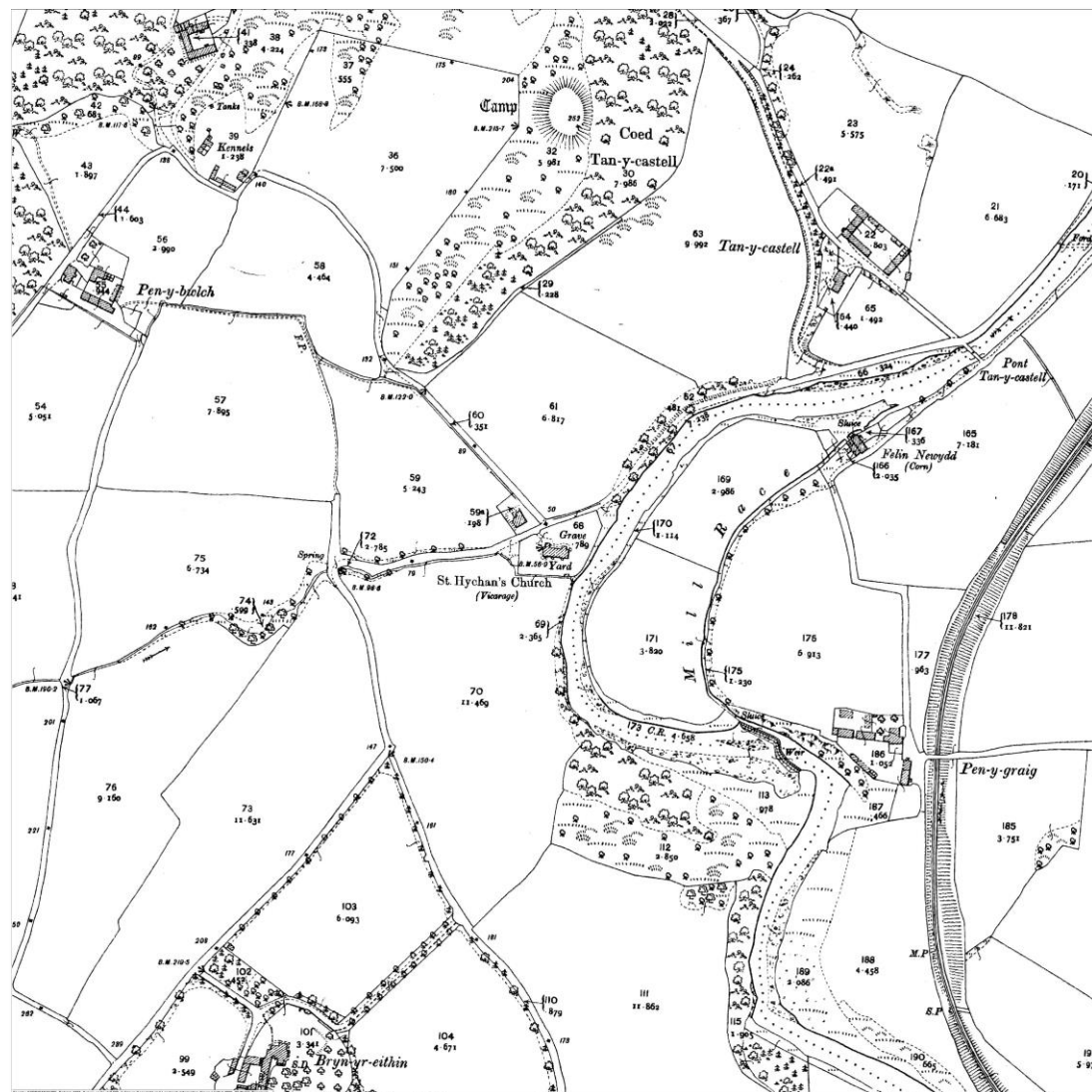


Fig. 4 – 1905 25 Inch to One Mile, OS.
 © Landmark Information Group Limited 2021.

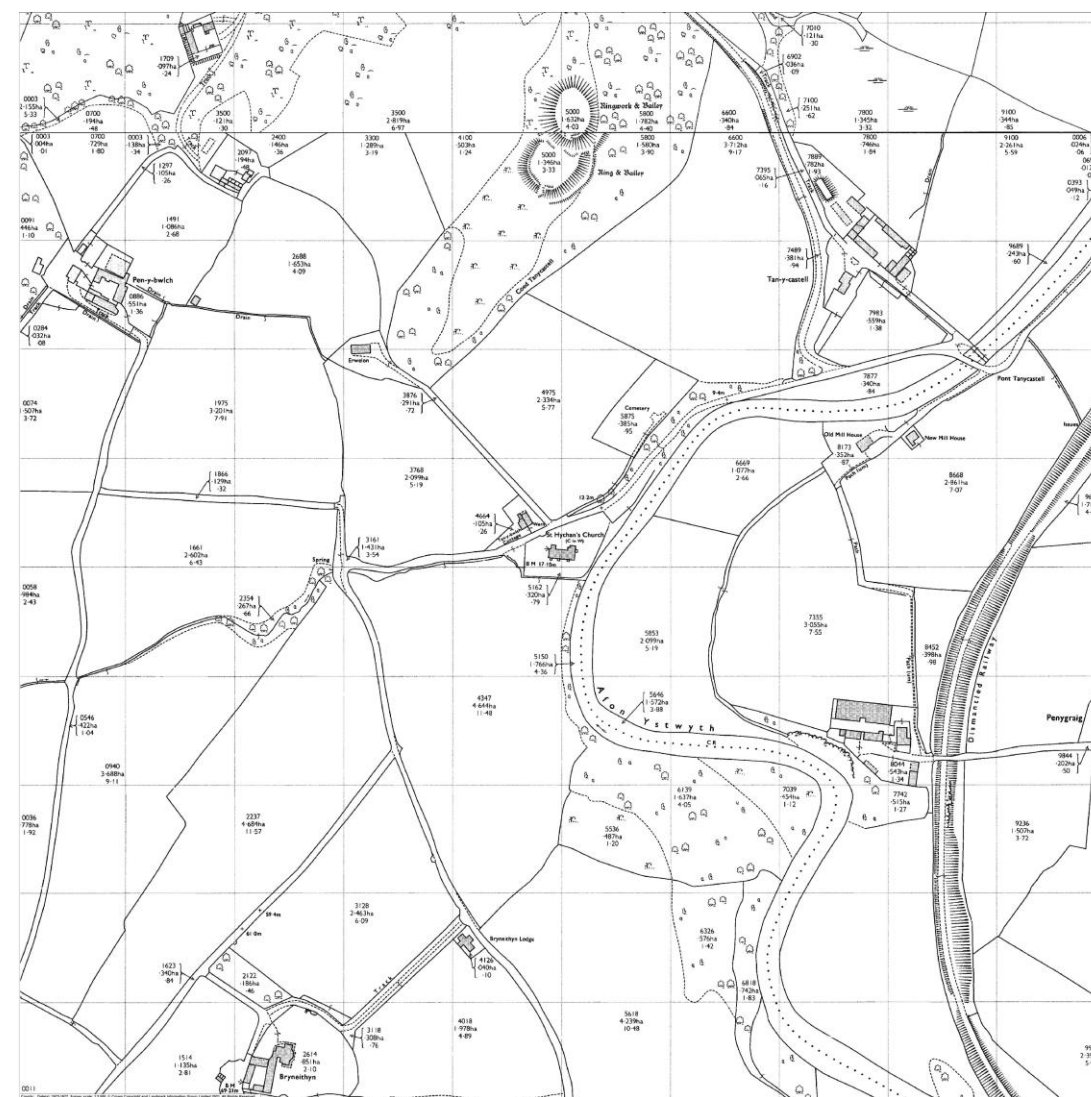
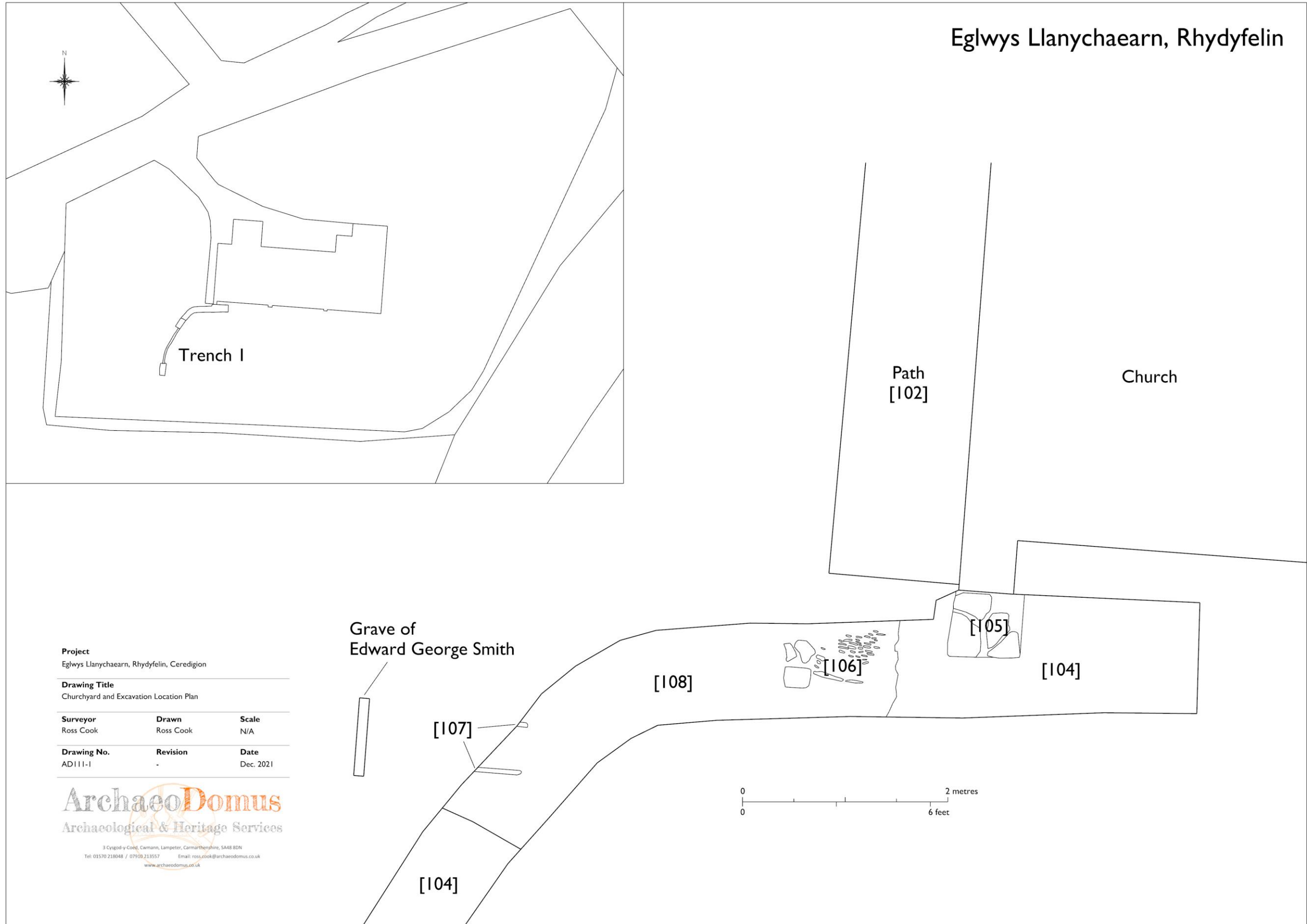


Fig. 5 – 1972 25 Inch to One Mile, OS.
 © Landmark Information Group Limited 2021.

APPENDIX II

Plans



Project		
Eglwys Llanychaearn, Rhydyfelin, Ceredigion		
Drawing Title		
Churchyard and Excavation Location Plan		
Surveyor	Drawn	Scale
Ross Cook	Ross Cook	N/A
Drawing No.	Revision	Date
AD111-1	-	Dec. 2021

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Fig. 6 – Trench Location Plan.

APPENDIX III

Watching Brief Photographic Archive



Plate 1 – View north-east, showing location of composting toilet.



Plate 2 – View west, showing graveyard before excavation.



Plate 3 – Footings of church [105].



Plate 4 – View west, showing footings [105] and cobbled area [106].



Plate 5 – Kerbstones [107] of burial plot belonging to Edward George Smith.



Plate 6 – View south, showing extent of excavations.

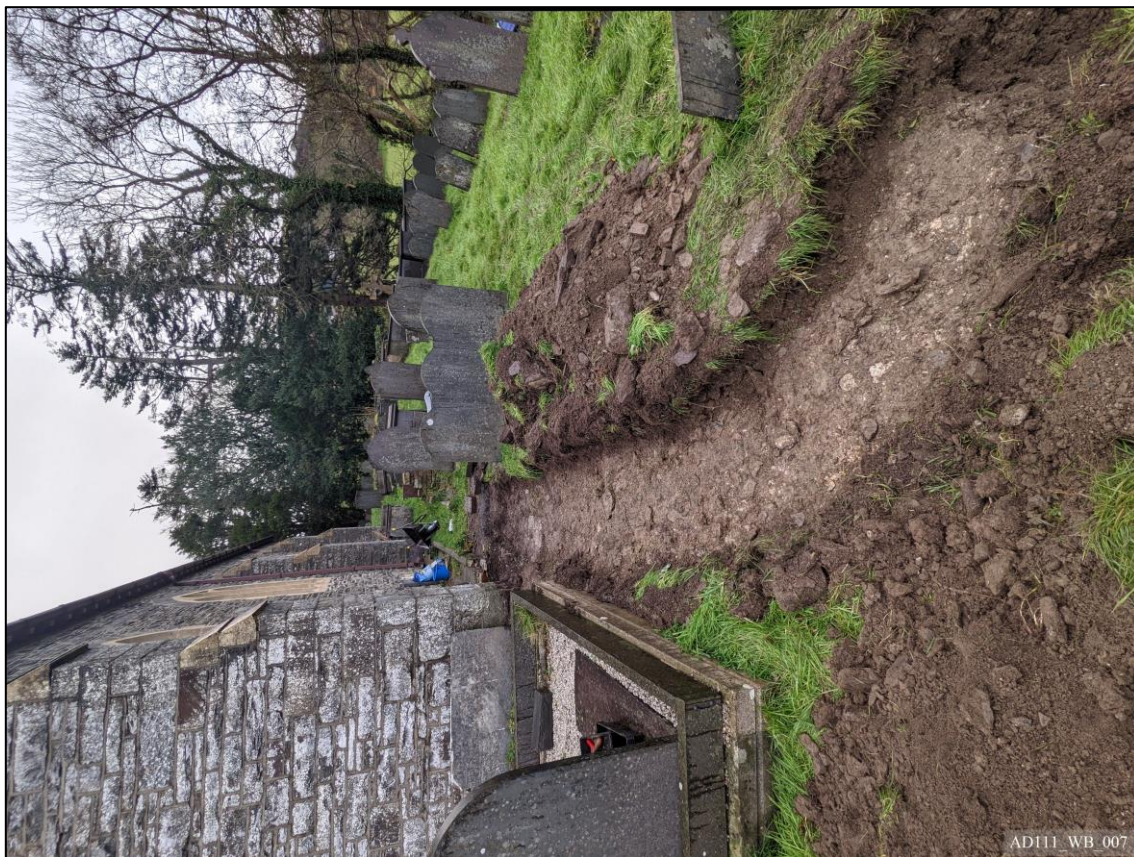


Plate 7 – View east, showing extent of excavations.



Plate 8 – View south, showing extent of excavations.



Plate 9 – Section of rainwater soakaway, showing (109) surrounded by (104).

APPENDIX IV

Context Register

Trench 1				
Context	Type	Depth	Description	Period
101	Deposit	0.00-0.03m	Turf and humus. Over entire excavated area.	Natural
102	Structure	0.00-0.02m	Tarmac path.	Modern
103	Deposit	0.02-0.05m	Sub base for tarmac path.	Modern
104	Deposit	0.03-0.80m	Highly mixed imported topsoil and subsoil levelling deposit. Depth varies across site, from minimum depth of 0.31m to 0.80m. Medium to dark brown. Regular small to large, angular and subangular stone inclusions. Some organic material and lime mortar disbursed throughout.	19 th Century
105	Structure	0.02-NB	Footings of church. Large mudstone blocks bedded in lime mortar.	19 th Century
106	Structure	0.03-0.12m	Small area of cobbled surface. River cobbles with kerb of larger river washed stone. Set into subsoil.	19 th Century
107	Structure	0.15-NB	Slate kerb stones to grave. At original surface level. Part of the grave of Edward George Smith, died September 6 th 1872, 5 years and 8 months.	19 th Century
108	Deposit	0.31-NB	Historic ground surface. Surface varies across site, from minimum depth of 0.31m to 0.80m.	Natural
109	Deposit	0.75-1.01m	Grey clay deposit. Surrounded by 106 . Part of 19 th century levelling of churchyard.	19 th Century

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Social/Cymdeithasol: www.twitter.com/archaeodomus
www.facebook.com/archaeodomus
