

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Llanelian yn Rhos Colwyn Bay, Conwy**

Archaeological Watching Brief



By

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Report No. 1084

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Llanelian yn Rhos Colwyn Bay, Conwy**

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment  
and Field Evaluation

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Report No: 1084

Date: **October 2012**

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# **Non-Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Mr Gethin Wyn Jones. It draws upon the results gained by a desk based assessment and field evaluation on land at Llanelian-yn-Rhos, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, as part of the submission of a planning application for the construction of a residential dwelling. A search of the regional HER revealed a total of fifteen recorded features and eight events within a 500m radius of the assessment area. The assessment area itself is located within the likely historic core of the village of Llanelian-yn-Rhos. The map regression analysis and aerial photographs consulted showed the assessment area to have no apparent features located within it for the last 170 years. The single trench, excavated along the proposed foundations of the new dwelling as part of the field evaluation, showed no finds or features of archaeological significance.*

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Location and scope of work**

1.1.1 In October 2012 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) carried out a desk based assessment and field evaluation on land adjacent to the south of the Parish church of St. Elian within the village of Llanelian-yn-Rhos, Colwyn Bay, Conwy. The assessment area covers approximately 760sqm, sits at 163m above ordnance datum and is centred on NGR SH 86333 76344 (Figs 1&2). The work was carried out at the request of Mr Gethin Wyn Jones to support and inform an outline planning application (0/39097).

1.1.2 A Brief (EVB 810) outlining the archaeological requirements of the local authority was prepared by Mark Walters of the curatorial section of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT). A specification for the work to be undertaken was drawn up by Chris E Smith (AW) which was subsequently approved by Mark Walters.

### **1.2 Geology and topography**

1.2.1 The underlying solid geology of the site is composed of Ludlow rocks (undifferentiated) made up of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone (Geological Survey Map, 2001).

1.2.2 The site is located within the centre of the small village of Llanelian-yn-Rhos, located 2.4km from the coast at Colwyn Bay to the north. The village is located close to the ridge of a large topographical promontory aligned north east to south west with small valleys either side. This is a sparsely wooded landscape composed of small pastoral fields and small nucleated settlement.

1.2.3 The proposed planning application pertains to the proposed development of the site for a new dwelling with associated landscaping, services and access provision.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

1.3.1 The site of the parish church within the village of Llanelian-yn-Rhos is thought to be of early medieval date. The following paragraphs are taken from the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's Eastern Conwy Churches Survey:

1.3.2 'St Elian's church is situated in the village of Llanelian-yn-Rhos, less than one mile to the south of Colwyn Bay. A double-naved structure, its north nave and perhaps the north chancel are of two phases and could be 13thC or 14thC if not earlier, but the south nave and chancel and the surviving medieval windows are all perpendicular and the doorways, of which there are several, utilise massive limestone blocks but are inherently undatable. Internally the roofs are late medieval and that over the south sanctuary has surviving paintings. Medieval furnishings and fittings include the lower part of the rood screen, painted panels from the rood loft, a disused font, and a chalice of late 15thC date. There are the usual range of wall monuments, some re-used pew panels of the early 18thC and a benefaction board of the same date. The churchyard is rectilinear and there is now little sign that it was ever curvilinear; it contains graveslabs going back to the middle of the 17thC.

The constructional sequence is not entirely clear. Western half of north nave is considered by Hubbard to be the earliest though its west and north walls are in different masonry; nave then extended eastwards and chancel added. However, could it be that the church was extended westwards thus enlarging the nave? Part of east wall subsequently rebuilt, perhaps when Perpendicular windows added, which implies that masonry shell might be 14thC or 13thC if not earlier - local tradition has it going back to the 9thC.

The dedication and perhaps the location suggest an early medieval foundation, but there is no circular churchyard and, inevitably, no confirmatory records. It is claimed that the church was established by Elian Geimiad in the 6th century, though another dedication is said to have been to Eleri. Llandrillo-yn-Rhos appears to have been its mother church.

The parish was originally known by the name of the township in which the church stands - Bodlennyn. The 1254 Taxation gives the name "Ecc'a de Bechwylemyn" and that of 1291 gives "Eccl'ia de Bodwelennyn" when it was valued at  $\text{œ}4\ 2s\ 1d$ . Sometime after 1291 this was superseded by the name of its founder, St Elian. In the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 gives "Rectoria de Llan Elian".

The church had a thatched roof in the 18thC and continued to be whitewashed into the 19thC. Glynne visited in 1854, noting that the west gallery had remnants of the rood loft panelling, that the windows on the south side were modern and poor, and that there were a few plain bench ends but the building was generally pewed.

Restoration occurred in 1859 when the seating was re-arranged, though there are few details of the other works that occurred at that time. In 1874, the painted

ceiling over the chancel was cleaned, and the surviving panels of the rood screen were varnished.

Llanelian churchyard is rectilinear in shape and relatively small, an extension to the burial area being added on the north side in 1933. The original churchyard is raised and shows a gentle slope from west to east on the north side of the church'

- 1.3.3 Though there are various other old structures within the village of Llanelian-yn-Rhos, such as Llan Farm (a late medieval 4 bay farmhouse), the church is by far the oldest. The age of the church, along with its position at a crossroads in the centre of the village, means it is likely to have formed a foci around which medieval settlement would have developed.

## **2 Aims and Objectives**

### **2.1 Desk Based Assessment**

2.1.1 The Desk Based Assessment was undertaken to:

- Gain an understanding of the likely archaeological features and their distribution within the assessment area.
- To place the results of the work in their historic context.
- To aid and inform any future archaeological work undertaken on the site.

### **2.2 Field Evaluation**

2.2.1 The field evaluation was undertaken to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within and immediately surrounding the area of proposed development
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present
- Establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological features and deposits
- Produce a record of the features.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Desk Based Assessment**

3.1.1 As part of the desk based assessment, the following repositories were searched for readily available information:

- A search of the regional HER database for the locations of all known archaeology (Monuments, Events) within a 500m radius of the assessment area was undertaken.
- The Royal Commission for Ancient & Historical Monuments (Wales) in Aberystwyth was consulted for aerial photography coverage. This included the Welsh assembly air photo collection.
- The National Library in Aberystwyth and Envirocheck online mapping were also consulted for readily available historic maps of the assessment area.
- Cadw's listed building and scheduled ancient monument database was also consulted for the locations of protected sites.

3.1.2 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological desk based assessment* (2008, revised 2011).

### 3.2 **Field Evaluation**

3.2.1 Excavation of the single evaluation trench (Fig 2) was undertaken using a JCB 3CX mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision and by hand.

3.2.2 The on-site work was undertaken by Chris E Smith (MifA). The overall management of the project was undertaken by Chris E Smith (MifA). All areas were photographed using high resolution digital photography.

3.2.3 All on-site illustrations were undertaken on drafting film using recognised conventions and scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:50) as appropriate.

3.2.4 All works were undertaken in accordance with the IfA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological evaluation* (2008, revised 2011) and current Health and Safety legislation.

### 3.3 **Finds**

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

### 3.4 **Palaeo-environmental evidence**

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the excavation.

## 4 **Desk Based Assessment Results**

### 4.1 **HER Data**

4.1.1 A search of the regional HER revealed a total of 15 known and recorded archaeological sites within a 500m radius of the assessment area (Fig 3) and showed a total of 8 archaeological events (field visits by CPAT) having also occurred within this radius

(Fig 4). The sites and events are listed by PRN number below. Further details of each are contained within Appendix 1.

#### 4.1.2 HER records:

- PRN 100461 Llanelian Church - Medieval
- PRN 16692 Llanelian Churchyard - Medieval
- PRN 105466 Llan Farm – Medieval/Post-medieval
- PRN 105473 Ridge & Furrow – Medieval/Post-medieval
- PRN 105474 Ridge & Furrow – Medieval/Post-medieval
- PRN 102833 Ysgubor Newydd Building – Post-medieval
- PRN 99456 Llanelian church chest tomb – Post-medieval
- PRN 99463 Llanelian church railed tomb – Post-medieval
- PRN 99464 Llanelian church railed tomb – Post-medieval
- PRN 99465 Llanelian church railed tomb – Post medieval
- PRN 99466 Llanelian church tomb – Post-medieval
- PRN 99469 Llanelian churchyard sundial – Post-medieval
- PRN 105501 Llanelian village - Multiperiod
- PRN 16713 Llanelian church - Multiperiod additions

#### 4.2 HER Data Summary

4.2.1 The monuments data retrieved from the local HER shows a moderate concentration of recorded sites within a 500m radius of the assessment area, the vast majority of which are Post-medieval in date and relate to either listed buildings or tombs within the church.

4.2.2 None of the recorded sites or events are located within the assessment area.

#### 4.3 Historic Maps

4.3.1 The following historic maps (Figs 5-9) were consulted as part of the desk based assessment:

- 1840s Tithe Map
- 1875 1:2500 1<sup>st</sup> Ed OS Map
- 1900 1:2500 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed OS Map

- 1960 1:2500 Ed OS Map
- 1993 1:10000 Edition OS Map

#### 4.4 **Map Regression**

- 4.4.1 1840s Tithe Map (Fig 5). The assessment area is shown in reasonably clear detail as is the rest of the village and its surroundings. No features are shown within the assessment area and very few structures are marked as present within the village itself. The Tithe Apportionment shows the land as being arable, belonging to John Lloyd Wynn and being occupied by Thomas Foulkes.
- 4.4.2 1875 25 Inch 1<sup>st</sup> Ed OS Map (Fig 6). The 1875 map shows the village in clearer detail than the earlier tithe map and includes details of property boundaries. It highlights a smithy as being present within the village as well as the Whit Lion pub. The assessment area remains blank.
- 4.4.3 1900 25 Inch 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed OS Map (Fig 7). The 1900 map shows the same level of detail as the 1875 OS map, with the addition of three Wells and a Post Office. The assessment area remains blank.
- 4.4.4 1960 25 Inch OS map (Fig 8). The 1960 OS map shows the same level of detail as previous OS maps. It shows more houses within the village situated to the east of the assessment area. No further features are shown and the assessment area remains blank.
- 4.4.5 1993 1:10000 Ed OS Map (Fig 9). The larger scale of this map consequently shows a reduction in the amount of detail depicted. The assessment area is clearly shown as being blank however.
- 4.4.6 None of the historic maps consulted as part of the desk based assessment show any significant change to the assessment area over the last 170 years. Slight changes are seen in the village surrounding the assessment area, such as the construction of the more houses to the east of the assessment area between 1900 and 1960. More features are marked on the small scale OS maps, such as Wells and Pumps etc though no features are apparent within the assessment area from 1840 onwards.

#### 4.5 **Aerial Photographs**

- 4.5.1 The assessment area was moderately covered by aerial photography. Those aerial photographs studied dated from between 1946 and 1986.
- 4.5.2 The four aerial photographs included within this report (1946, 1954, 1957 and 1986) all show the assessment area in reasonably clear detail. All show it as being blank with no apparent features.
- 4.5.3 The aerial photograph analysis proved useful as a compliment to the cartographic analysis and confirms that the assessment area is blank between 1946 and 1986.

#### 4.6 **Portable Antiquities Scheme Database**

4.6.1 An online search of the portable antiquities scheme database returned no finds from within the assessment area.

#### **4.7 Desk Based Assessment Summary**

4.7.1 In Summary, the assessment area has been used as agricultural land for at least 170 years. No features have been shown to have existed within the assessment area from 1840 onwards.

4.7.2 The HER data has shown a slight bias in terms of the local features dating to the post-medieval period and relating to listed buildings or aspects of the church.

4.7.3 No features of archaeological interest are thus highlighted by the desk based assessment.

## **5 Evaluation Results**

### **5.1 Soils and ground conditions**

5.1.1 The topsoil was a 0.2m deep, mid brown, silt deposit with infrequent small stone inclusions. This was uniform over the entire area of the trench. The natural deposits were composed of either solid bedrock or frost shattered bedrock fragments within an orange clay.

5.1.2 The ground conditions were dry throughout.

### **5.2 Description (Plates 5-7)**

5.2.1 The single 'L' shaped trench measured 15m along each branch and was a total of 1.5m wide. The trench was positioned along the proposed lines of two walls of the property.

5.2.2 Removal of turf and topsoil showed the topsoil deposit to be approximately 0.2m thick. In some areas of the trench this was sufficient to expose the natural bedrock beneath. Excavation in other areas of the trench ceased at a maximum depth of 0.45m when natural orange clay with frequent frost shattered bedrock inclusions was encountered.

## **6 Finds**

6.1.1 No finds, of any date, were located within the trench or the topsoil.

## **7 Discussion and Interpretation**

### **7.1 Overall interpretation**

7.1.1 The overall interpretation gained from the work carried out is that the assessment area, despite being located close to the centre of a medieval village, is archaeologically sterile.

- 7.1.2 The desk based assessment has highlighted the early nature of the church at Llanelian and the likelihood of medieval settlement in and around this area having existed.
- 7.1.3 The cartographic and aerial photograph analysis has shown that the area appears to have been used as a field for at least the last 170 years. No finds or features suggestive of an earlier usage of the area were located by the field evaluation.
- 7.1.4 Given the location of the site within the centre of a medieval village and adjacent to a continuously occupied medieval building, the lack of finds and features appears somewhat anomalous and may suggest the village was never larger than it is today.

## 8 **Acknowledgements**

- 8.1.1 Thanks are due to Gethin Wyn Jones for liaising on-site and to Mark Walters (CPAT) for assistance with monitoring.

## 9 Bibliography and References

British Geological Survey. 2001, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Solid Geology Map, UK South Sheet.

<http://www.cpat.demon.co.uk/projects/longer/churches/conwy/16713.htm> - Accessed 20/10/2012

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008, revised 2011. Standards and Guidance for a Desk Based Assessment

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008, revised 2011. Standards and Guidance for a Field Evaluation.

### Aerial Photographs by Sortie/Frame/Height/Date (Included)

3G/TUD/UK – 5283 – 12,000ft - Jan 1946

82/RAF/889 – 0086 – 30,000ft – April 1954

58/RAF/2196 – 0050 – 15,650ft – June 1957

OS Zeiss 049 – Colwyn Bay South – 066 – 8,200ft – March 1986

### Historic Maps Consulted:

1840s Tithe Map

1875 1:2500 1<sup>st</sup> Ed OS Map

1900 1:2500 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed OS Map

1960 1:2500 Ed OS Map

1993 1:1000 Ed OS Map

### Other Sources Consulted:

Full search of regional HER database

Search of Cadw Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument database

Online search of Portable Antiquities Scheme database

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## **APPENDIX I:** Figures

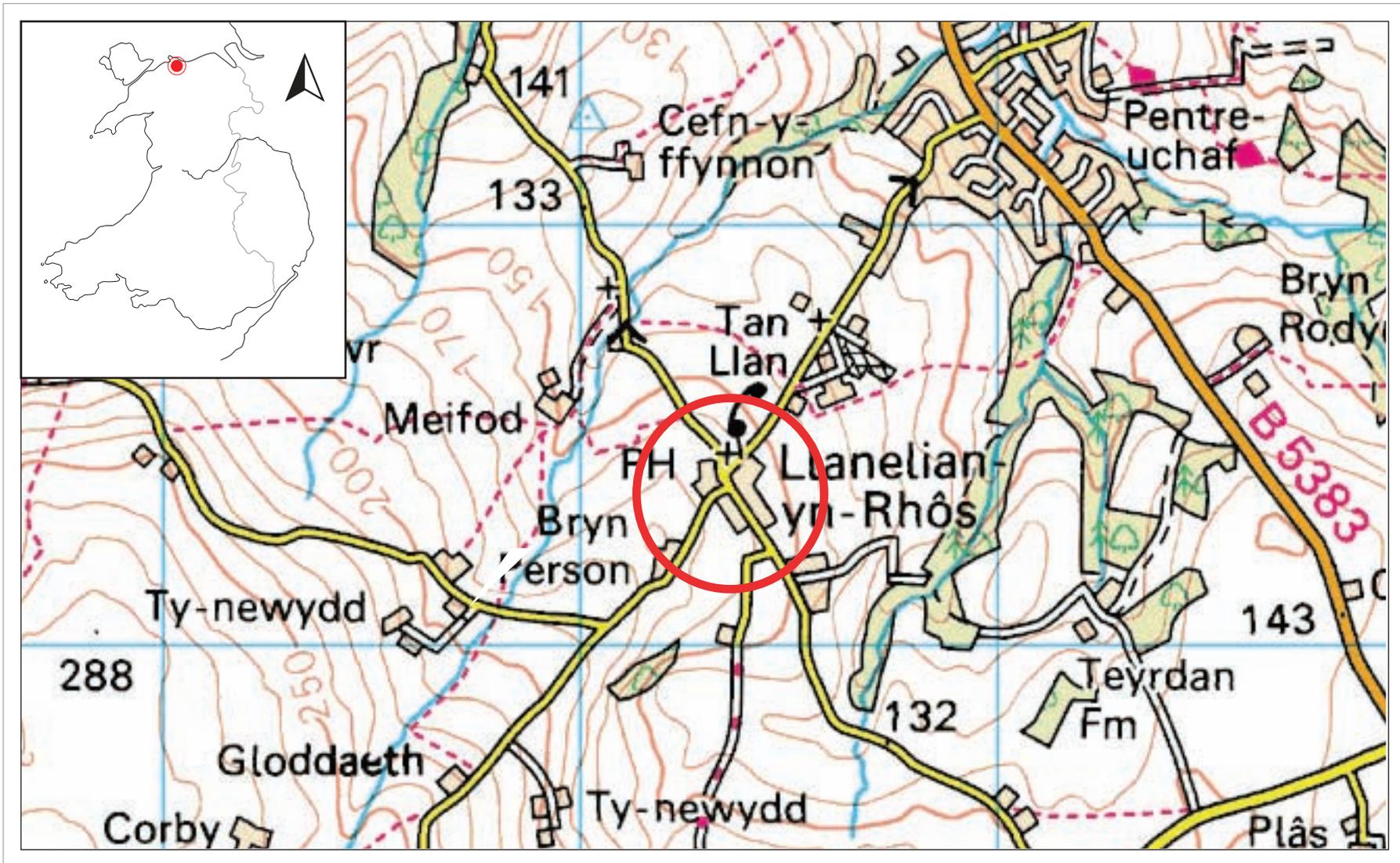


Fig 01: Map showing location of assessment area

18/07/2012 23:04:14 C:\Users\User\Documents\Projects\llanelain\CAD\PL1003.01 Location Plan.dwg - ISD A4 (210.00 x 297.00 MM)

Number [PL]003.01

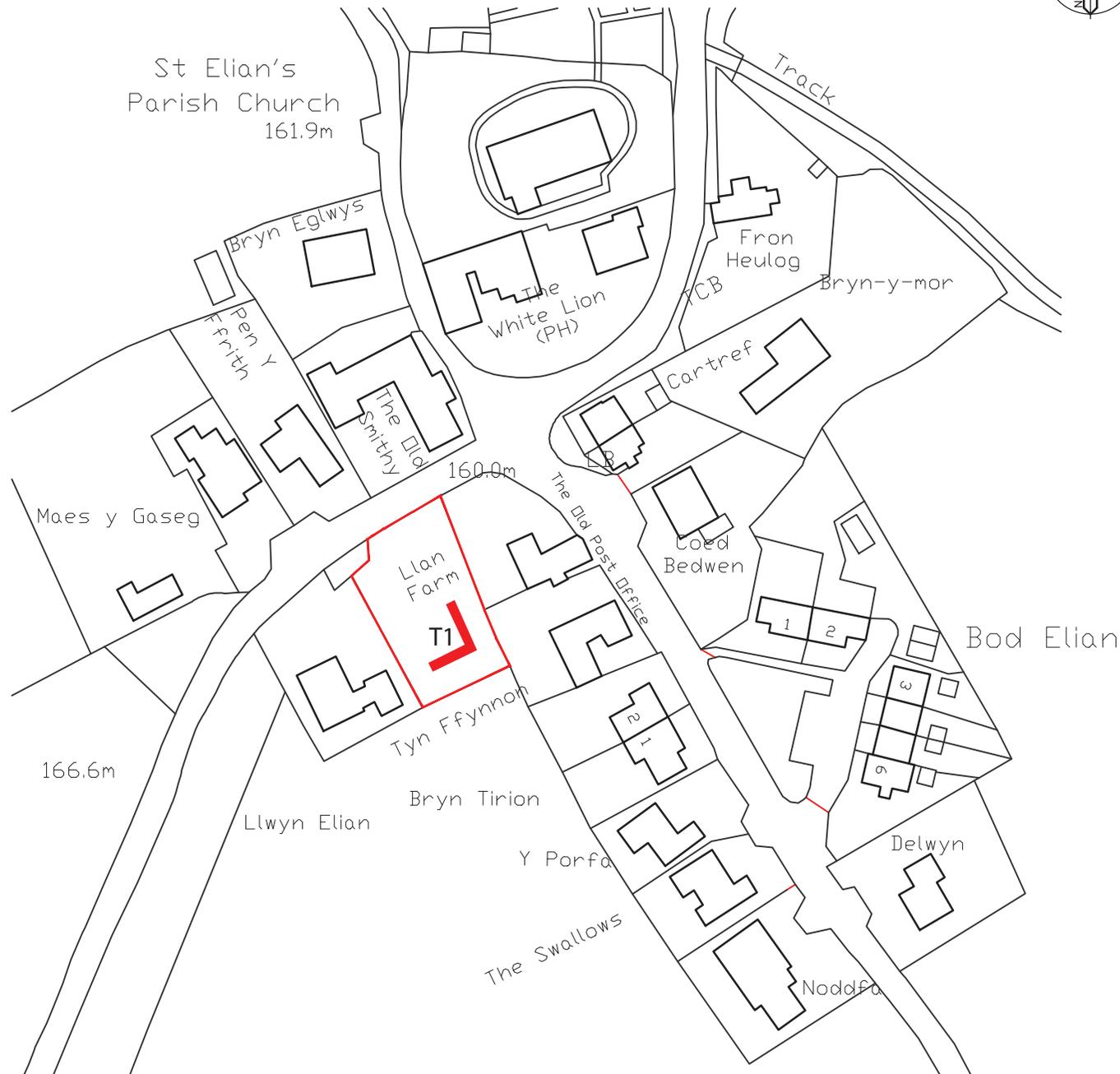


Fig 2: Site and trench location plan

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REVISIONS

Job **TY LLAN, LLANELAIN**

Drawing **Site Layout**

Number **[PL]003.01**

Scale **1:1250@A4** Date **08/01/12**

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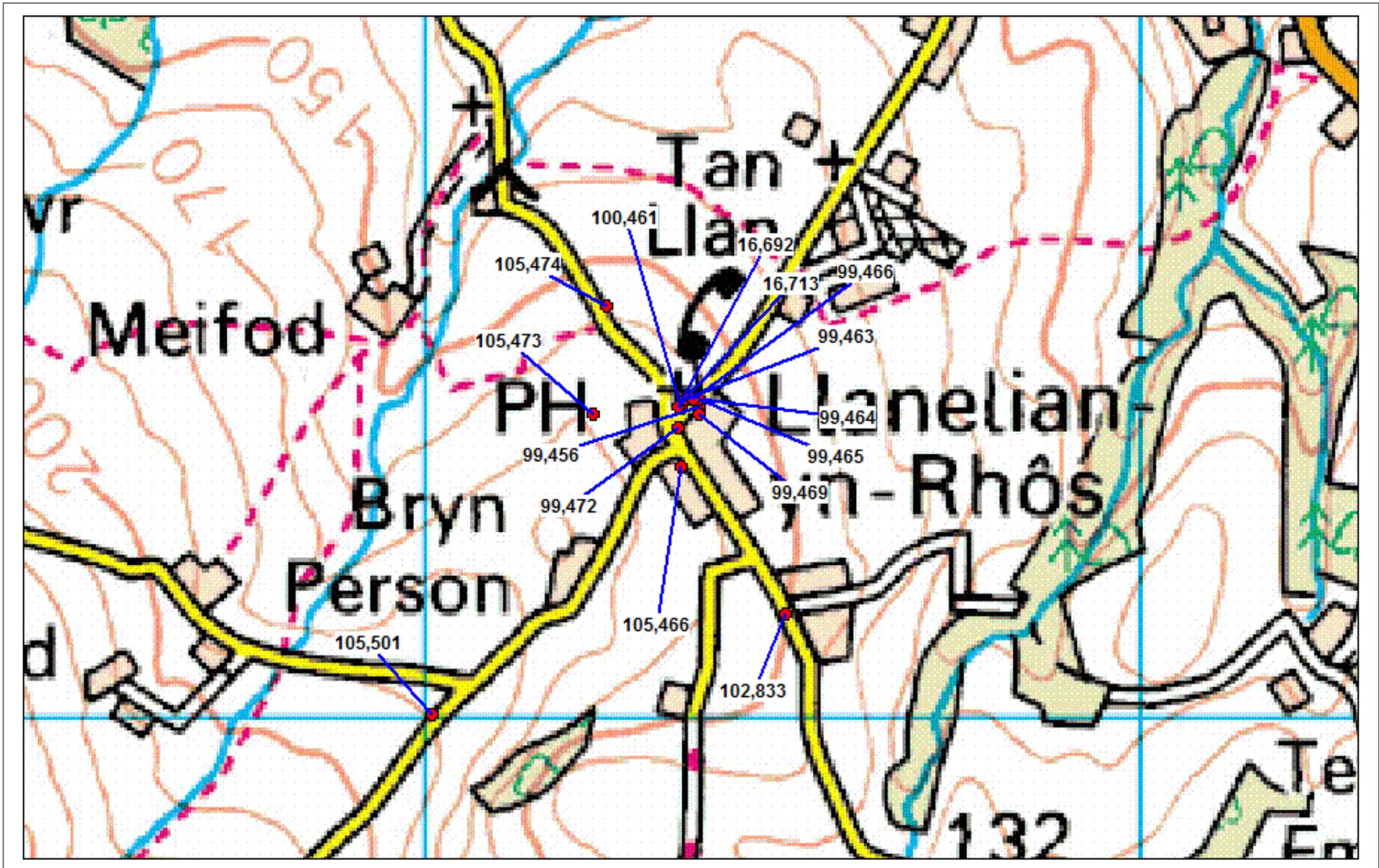


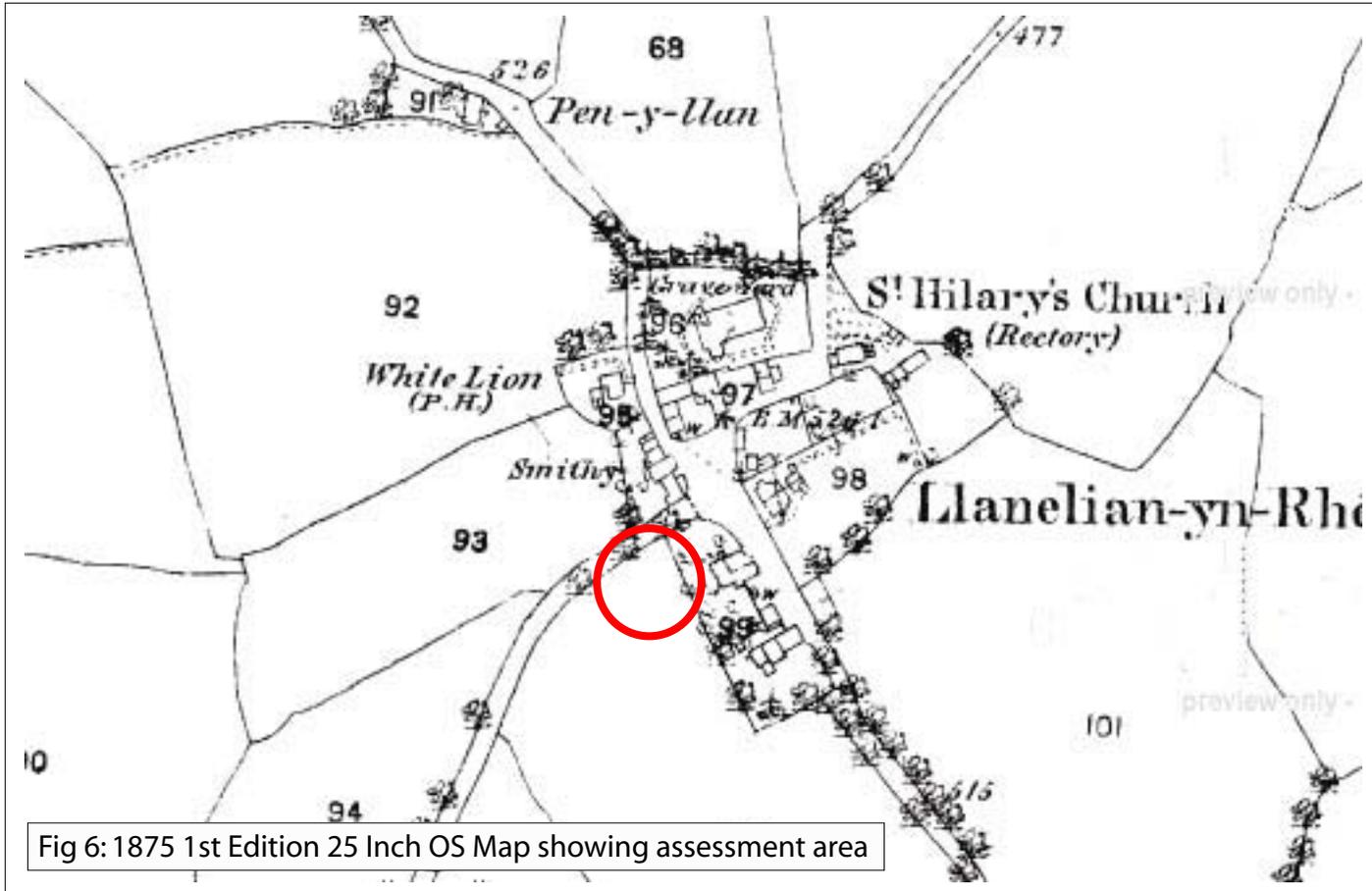
Fig 3: GIS map showing distribution of HER data spots by PRN number within a 500m radius of the assessment area



Fig 4: GIS map showing distribution of HER events data by PRN number within a 500m radius of assessment area



Fig 5: 1840s Tithe map showing the assessment area



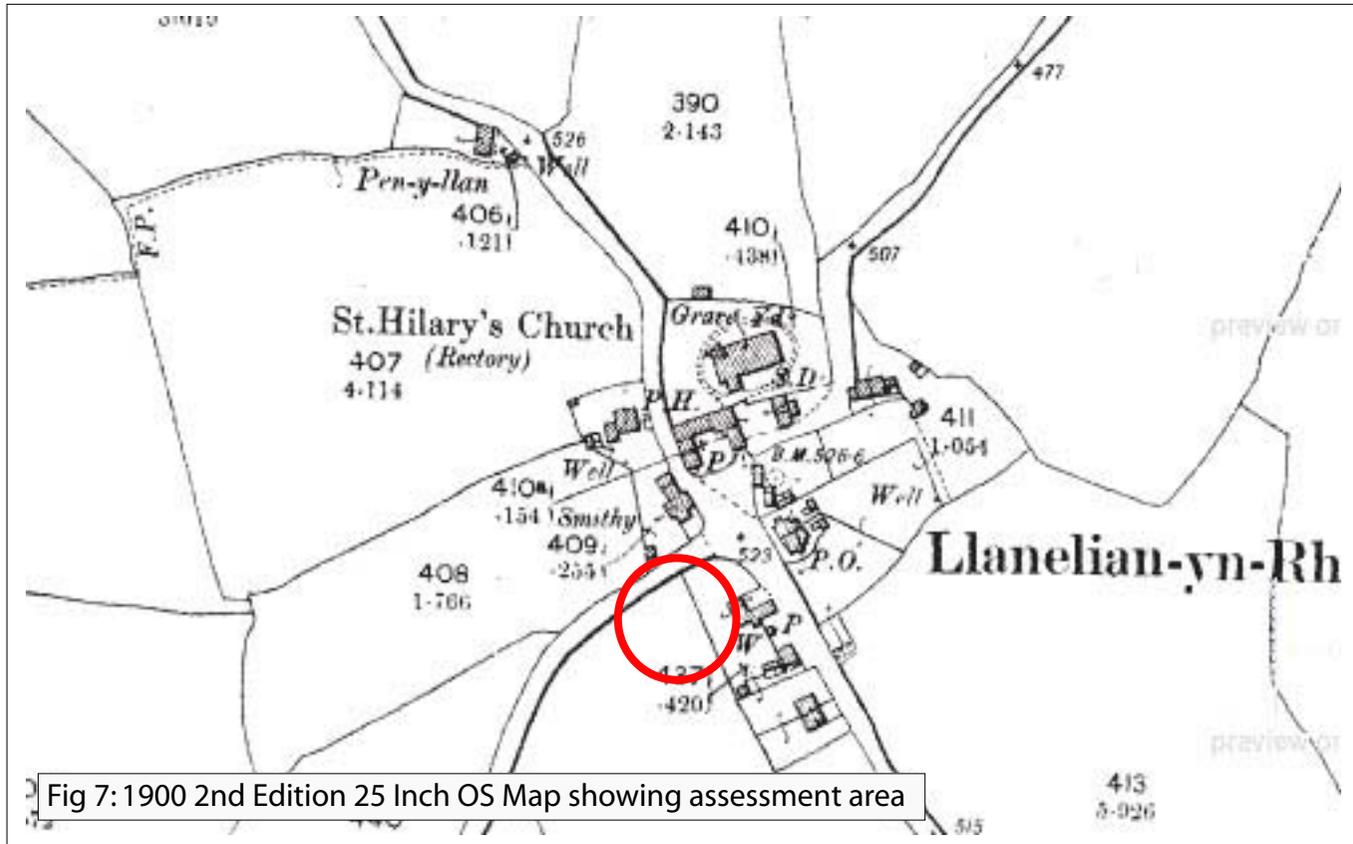
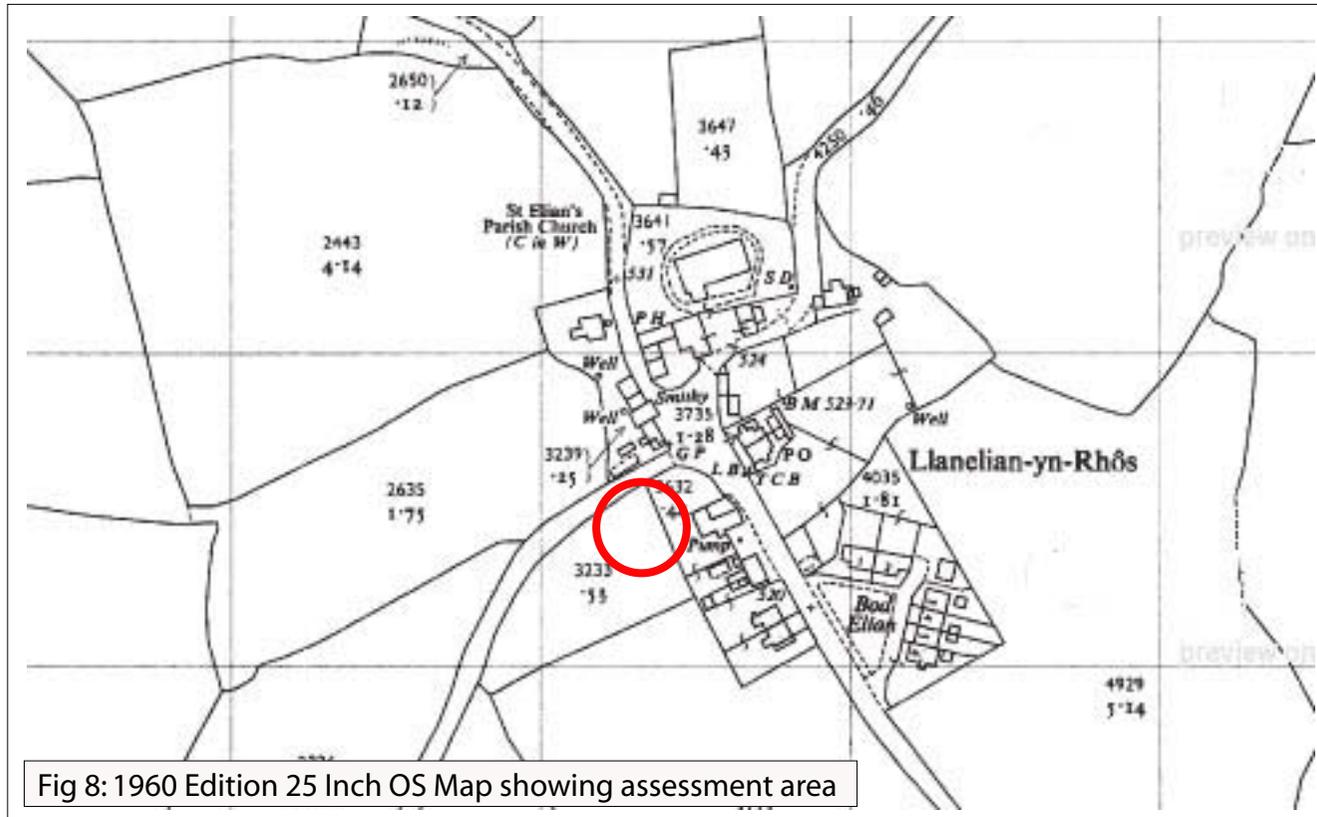


Fig 7: 1900 2nd Edition 25 Inch OS Map showing assessment area



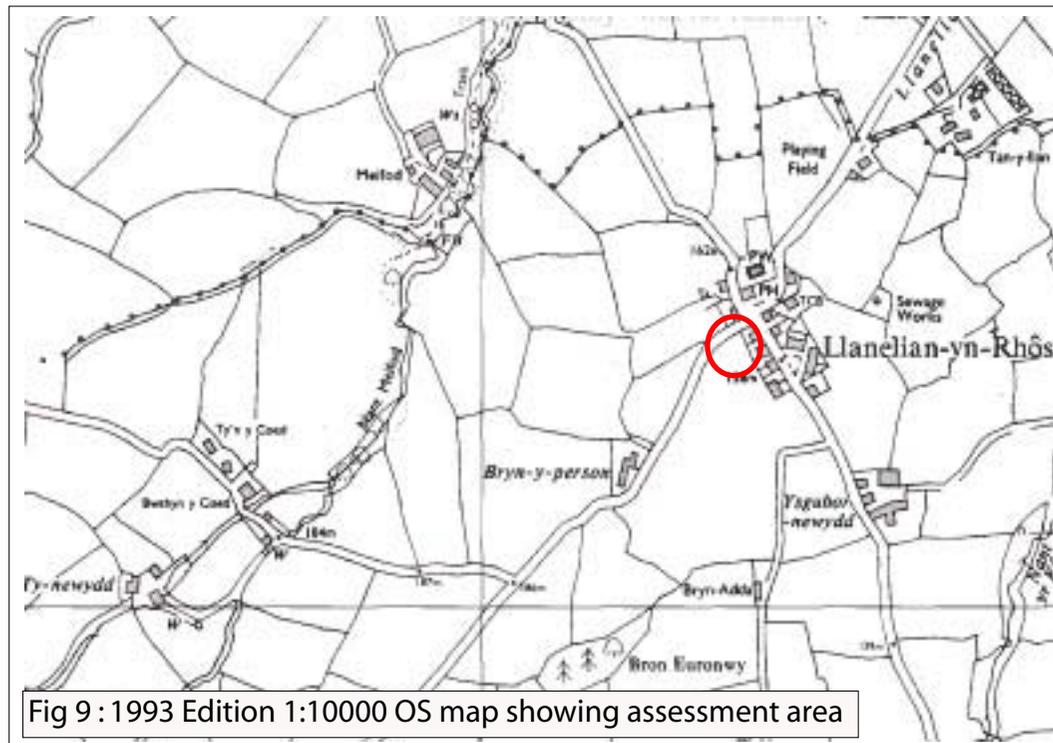


Fig 9 : 1993 Edition 1:10000 OS map showing assessment area

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## **APPENDIX II: Plates**



Plate 1: 1946 Aerial photograph showing assessment area

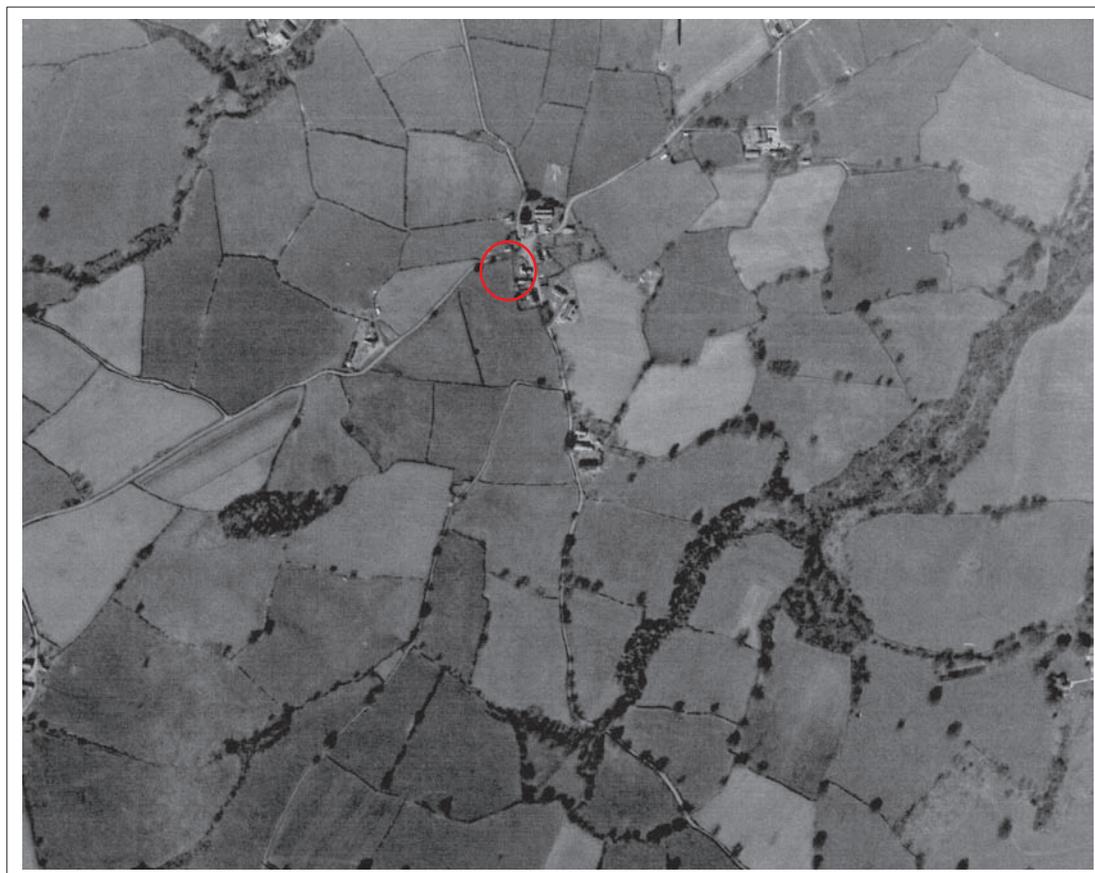


Plate 2: 1954 Aerial photograph showing assessment area



Plate 3: 1957 Aerial photograph showing assessment area

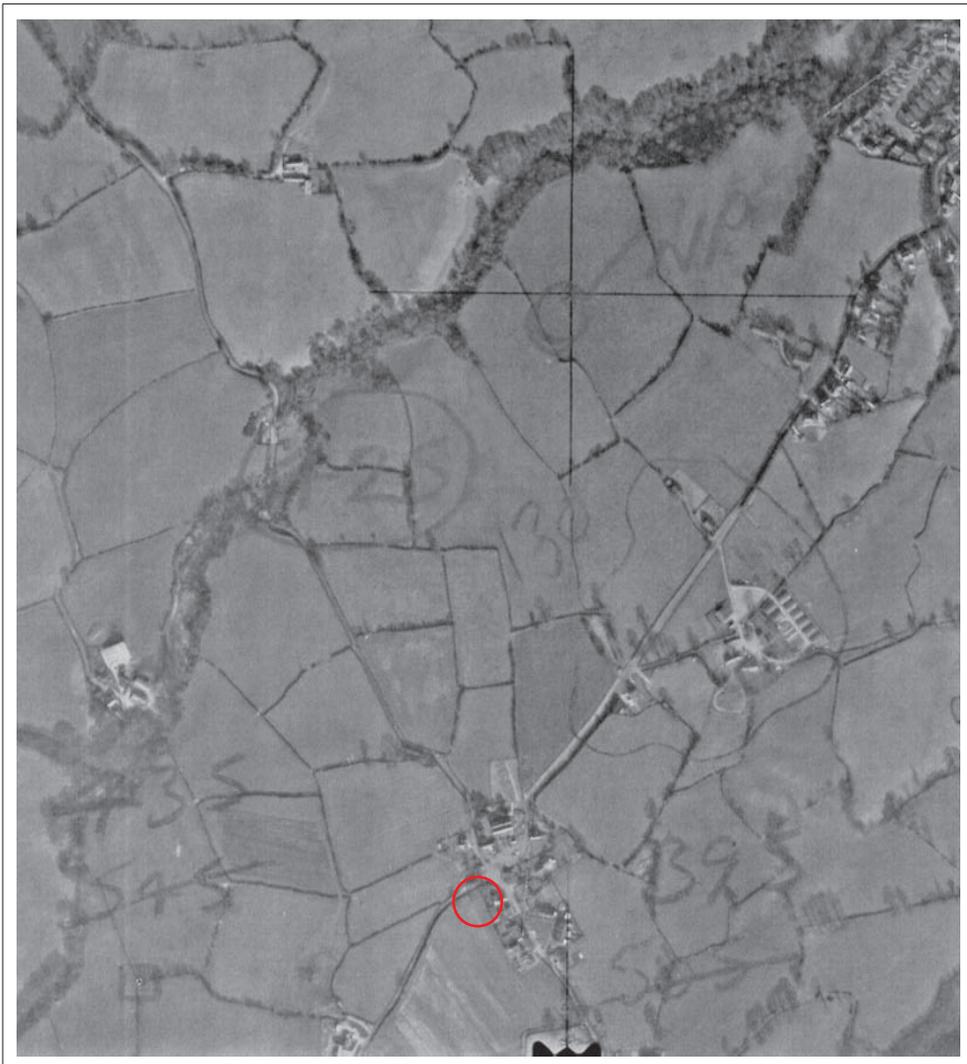


Plate 4: 1986 Aerial photograph showing assessment area



Plate 5: View of bedrock within trench  
Scales 2x1m



Plate 6: View east along trench. Scales 2x1m



Plate 7: View south along trench, Scales 2x1m

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## **APPENDIX III: HER Data Catalogues**

PRN 100,461.0      PERIOD Medieval                      NGR SH8635576428

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Hilary or St Elian)  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II\* listed church A double aisled church entirely perpendicular in date. There are

PRN 16,692.00      PERIOD Medieval                      NGR SH86357643

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Hilary or St Elian), yard  
DESCRIPTIO POSSIBLE EARLY CIRCULAR CHURCHYARD IN FORMER TIMES, SINCE ENCROACHED UPON. (SMR,

PRN 102,833.0      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH86507614

SITE\_NAME Ysgubor Newydd Building  
DESCRIPTIO A CRUCK BUILDING.;

PRN 105,466.0      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8635476346

SITE\_NAME Llan Farm  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II\* listed house

PRN 105,473.0      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH86237642

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos ridge and furrow  
DESCRIPTIO RIDGE AND FURROW CULTIVATION IN PASTURE FIELD. RIDGES RUN EAST-

PRN 105,474.0      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH86257657

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos ridge and furrow  
DESCRIPTIO RIDGE AND FURROW CULTIVATION IN PASTURE FIELD. RIDGES RUN N-S

PRN 99,456.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8638076430

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Elian), chest tomb  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed chest tomb

PRN 99,463.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8636076440

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Elian), railed tomb  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed tomb

PRN 99,464.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8638076440

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Elian), railed tomb  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed tomb

PRN 99,465.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8638076440

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Elian), railed tomb  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed tomb

PRN 99,466.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8637076440

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Elian), tomb  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed tomb

PRN 99,469.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8638076420

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church (St Elian), sundial  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed sundial

PRN 99,472.00      PERIOD Post-Medieval                      NGR SH8635076400

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos, White Lion Public House  
DESCRIPTIO Grade II listed public house

PRN 105,501.0 PERIOD Multiperiod NGR SH8676  
Multiple Settlement Civil Multiperiod Various

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-rhos  
DESCRIPTIO 1 Location 1.1 Llanelian-yn-Rhos is situated at the crossing of two minor roads, a mile a

PRN 16,713.00 PERIOD Multiperiod NGR SH86357643

SITE\_NAME Llanelian-yn-Rhos Church  
DESCRIPTIO Llanelian appears not to have acquired its 'early' name until after 1291; at that date it w

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## **APPENDIX IV:** Archive Cover Sheet

# ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

## Llanelian yn Rhos, Conwy

Site Name:	Llanelian
Site Code:	LRC/12/EVA
PRN:	-
NPRN:	-
SAM:	-
Other Ref No:	-
NGR:	NGR SH 86333 76344
Site Type:	Green Field
Project Type:	DBA & EVA
Project Manager:	Chris E Smith
Project Dates:	October 2012
Categories Present:	None
Location of Original Archive:	AW
Location of duplicate Archives:	-
Number of Finds Boxes:	-
Location of Finds:	-
Museum Reference:	-
Copyright:	AW
Restrictions to access:	None

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