

CAE GLAS, WHITCHURCH, SOLVA PEMBROKESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Report prepared
by
Dyfed Archaeological Trust
for
Mr . Ronald Griffiths



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DYFED
archaeological trust

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**CAE GLAS, WHITCHURCH, SOLVA
PEMBROKESHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL watching brief**

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SUMMARY

The construction of an access road for a proposed new housing estate at Cae Glas, Witchurch, Solva, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM7980/2540) required an archaeological watching brief for planning development (NP05/505). The watching brief was necessary because of the proximity of the medieval parish church, just to the south-east of the site.

In order to protect the potential archaeological interests Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management, as advisors to the Planning Department of Pembrokeshire County Council, recommended that an archaeological condition be attached to the planning application.

Mr Ronald Griffiths commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the watching brief in June 2008.

A trench was excavated from the south entrance of the development to the end of the proposed road in the western extremity of the site.

A field boundary or possible wall foundation was the only archaeological feature found at the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project commission

A new access road for a proposed housing development at Cae Glas, Witchurch, Solva, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM7980/2540) required an archaeological watching brief (planning number NP 05/509). The watching brief was deemed necessary because of the proximity of the medieval parish church, which is located c.120m to the southwest and also due to other archaeological sites in the area.

Mr Ronald Griffiths commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the watching brief in June 2008.

1.2 Scope of the project

The watching brief was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during trench cutting operations for the new road.

1.3 Report outline

This report describes the physical environment of the site (Section 2) before summarising the watching brief results (Section 3) and the conclusions (Section 4) based on those results.

1.4 Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

The proposed development area lies in the village of Whitchurch due north of the town of Solva, in Pembrokeshire at NGR SM 79802540. The proposed road heads north from the road entrance following the boundary of the present property to the west of the site, then curves to the west where the property boundary terminates. Topographically the site is set on a high summit plateau of land, which is 82 metres above sea level.

2.2 Cartographic information

Through studying past maps of the location of a development, can lead to providing valuable information about archaeological features which are discovered at a watching brief. The Historic Environment resource at Llandeilo provided maps of the area.

The second edition map of the Whitchurch area shown in [figure 2], shows that the field containing the watching brief retains the same shape and form as of present and that there is no visible archaeological sites visible within the field. The first edition map of the Whitchurch area shown in [figure 3] also shows that the field boundaries have not changed from the present shape or form. Also there are no buildings or any above ground archaeology listed within the field boundaries.

The Tithe map of 1841 contained in [figure 4] shows the field of Cae Glas and the surrounding area. The field is labelled as being number 191. The map has provided valuable information in highlighting an earlier smaller field enclosure, which is situated in the eastern corner of the field of Cae Glas. This field is labelled 190. The smaller field labelled as 190 was described as being a garden and occupied by a Mr Levi David. The field 191 is called Upper Glebe Field in the 1841 tithe. The name Upper Glebe possibly indicates that this land was once in the possession of the church. In 1841 it is describe as being arable land and occupied by Mr Levi David. The Tithe map also shows that to the south of the church the field boundaries could be said to be respecting a possible earlier enclosure, however to the north of the church this possibility is not so clear.

2.3 The known archaeological resource

The Whitchurch area has a wide range of archaeological sites dating from the Prehistoric period to the post-medieval period. A search of the regional HER revealed no known archaeological sites other than a possibly field boundary shown on the 1841 tithe map within the development area. To the south-east is the medieval parish church (PRN 2675: NGR SM7999254). The church may have been constructed on an earlier ecclesiastical site; it is dedicated to Saint David, which is often an indication of an early foundation. Another factor which might point to an early medieval date for the church is the recorded presence of a possible early medieval inscribed stone which was situated c.21m to the north of the church. The windows of the church have been renewed but the chancel, nave and north transept are of a late 13th century date (Salter, M, 1994, 76). To the south of the development the RCAHM in 1925 recorded that a Mr. Herbert W. Evans of Solva found two stone spindle whorls and one holed hone. The dates of the objects are suggested to be either Iron Age or Roman (PRN 2670: NGR SM799253). The road passing to the south of the development has also been suggested as having Roman origins, however, this is not proven. To the east of the site there is also a possible Iron Age Hillfort (PRN 2756: NGR SM80452545). A Bronze Age standing stone was recorded by the RCAHM in 1925; however, the stone was presumably destroyed when St David's airfield was built during the Second World War. The stone was situated c.360m to the west of the development of Cae Glas (PRN 2679: NGR SM79502544). A Bronze Age palstave (axe head) was also found in a mineral extraction plant to the north-east of the site (PRN 2743 NGR: SM804259).

3. SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 Methodology

The watching brief consisted of a site visit by an archaeologist to oversee the excavation of a 0.6m wide trench along the entire route of the proposed road. The excavation was carried out by a machine using a toothless grading bucket, and was undertaken to assess the presence of archaeological features and deposits across a representative section of the site ahead of the ground works for the access road. All archaeologically significant features and deposits were recorded and photographed, and, where relevant, measured plans were drawn.

3.2 Results

The trench ran along the proposed route of the access road and was up to c.0.8m deep in the western part of the development and c.0.60m in width. There appeared to be two separate upper soil horizons. The first layer encountered (1000) was light blackish brown topsoil that at the south end of the development near the entrance contained a lot of hard-core surfacing gravel and some modern building material, which was very homogenous in its nature. The depth of this layer was 0.42 m near the entrance of the development, whereas at the western end of the site it was a lot shallower.

The next layer found (1001) was possibly buried topsoil. The layer was mid yellowish brown silty clay and appeared to possibly show signs of natural leaching. This was more apparent at the western end of the trench whereas to the south near the entrance this layer was not present, this could be due to the fact that a house was planned to be built near the entrance and therefore perhaps a lot of this deposit has been removed in past. The layer was up to 0.24 m in thickness.

The next layer discovered (1002) was a mid orangey brown silty clay subsoil which had a thickness of 0.40m and contained 2% sub angular stones. The natural layer (1003) was light brownish orange silty clay and was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.80m at the western part of the development. At the west end of the excavation there also appeared to be fluvio-glacial channels present in the natural. One sherd of post-medieval pot was found lying on top of one of the channels; however, this artefact could have been carried to this depth by natural processes such as possible worm action. At the western extremity of the trench a modern soak-away pipe was found. Towards the south end of the trench three natural outcrops\knolls of weathered bedrock were encountered.

One archaeological feature was recorded during the watching brief and appeared to be either a field boundary ditch or a cut for a wall footing [1005]. The feature is linear in plan and its alignment was west to east. The width of the feature was 0.90m and its excavated depth was 0.13m, however, the feature was not fully excavated to its full depth. The fill of the feature was light greyish brown silty clay and contained moderate amounts of medium sized limestone rocks.

Towards the entrance at the south of the site part of a modern fireplace was found in the trench, which might suggest that this part of the site was used for deposition of waste building materials from modern housing.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief has concluded that no evidence for settlement or ecclesiastical use of the site was present along the proposed route of the access road. A ditch or wall footing discovered during the watching brief seems to correspond with a boundary shown on the 1841 Tithe map.

SOURCES

Maps

Ordnance Survey 1964 Sheet SM 72 NE 1:10,560

Ordnance Survey 1889 Pembrokeshire sheet XXI NW 1st edition 1:2500

Ordnance Survey 1907 Pembrokeshire sheet XXI NW 2nd edition 1:2500

Ordnance Survey 1997 Landranger St David's and Haverfordwest. Sheet 157.
1:50000

Published sources

RCAHM, 1925, *Pembrokeshire Inventory*. London: HM. Stationary Office.

Salter, M, 1994, *The Old Parish Churches Of South-west Wales*. Severnside Printers.

Maps



Figure 1: Location map showing the watching brief area (pink circle).

Reproduced from the 1997 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

Cae Glas, Whitechurch, Solva, Pembrokeshire: archaeological watching brief

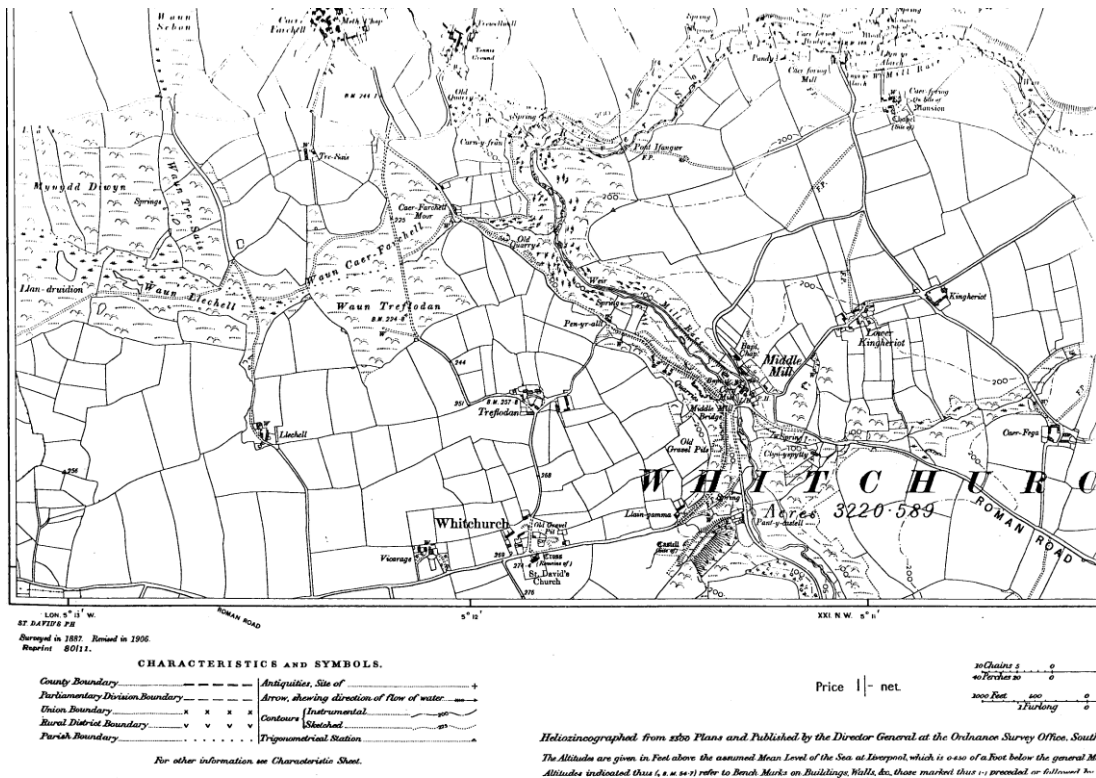


Figure 2: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:2500, 1907.

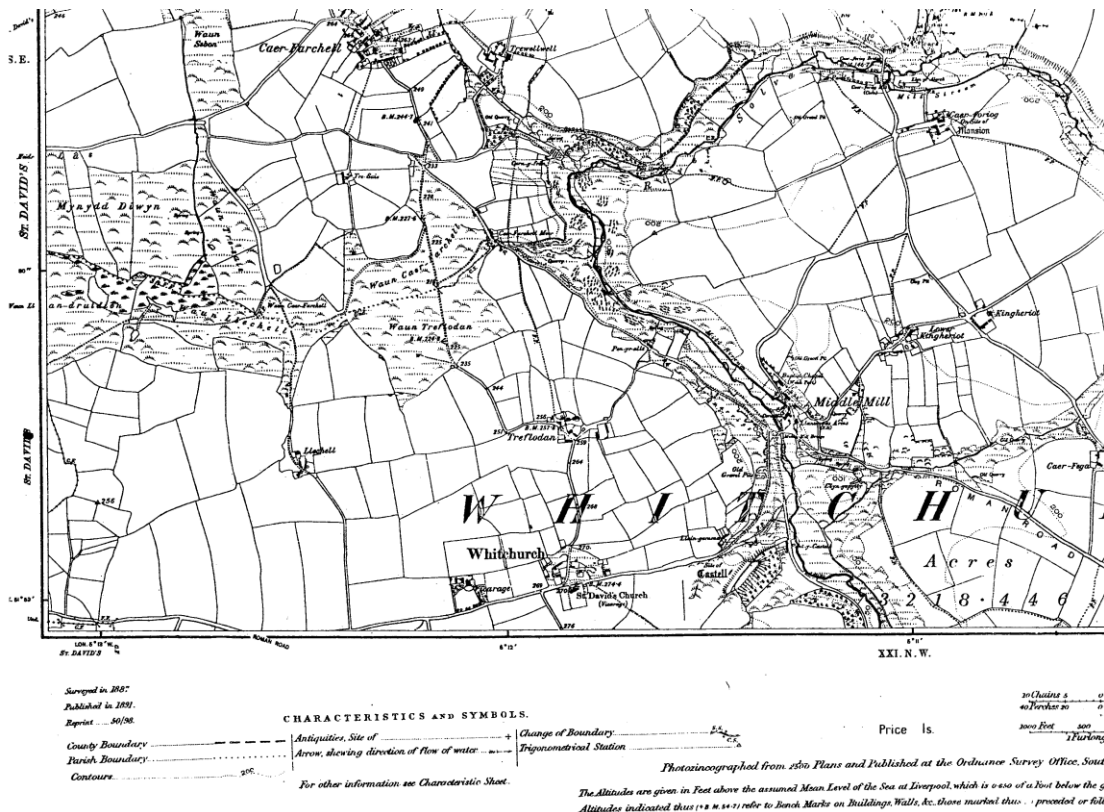


Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500, 1889.

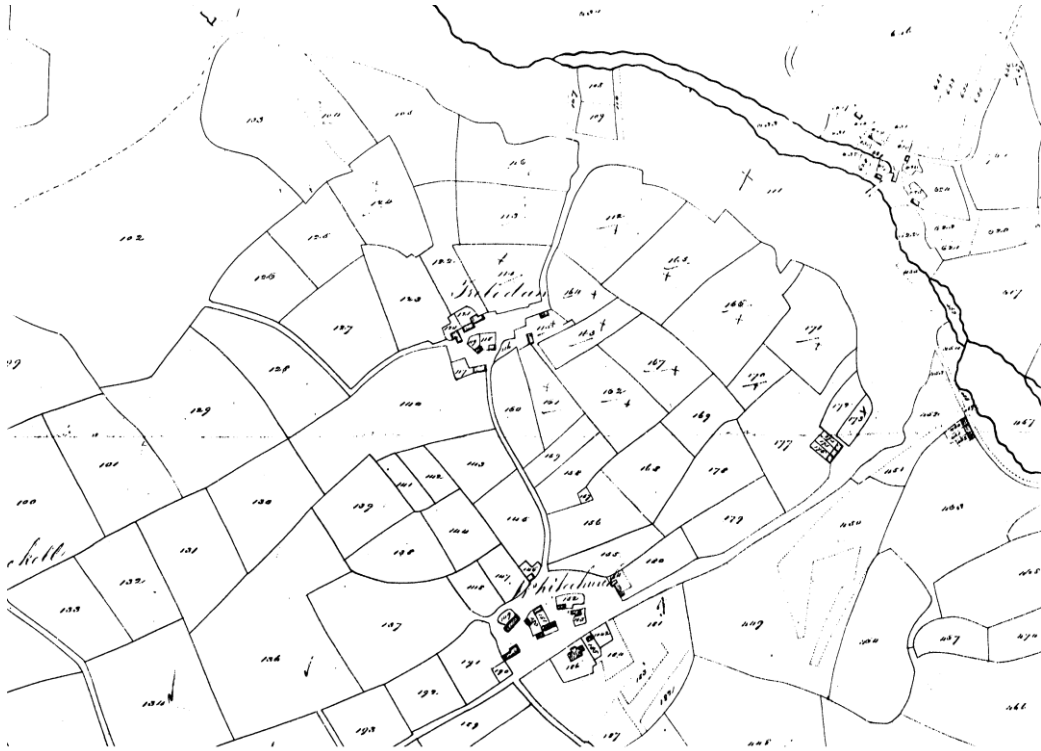


Figure 4: Tithe map of 1841.

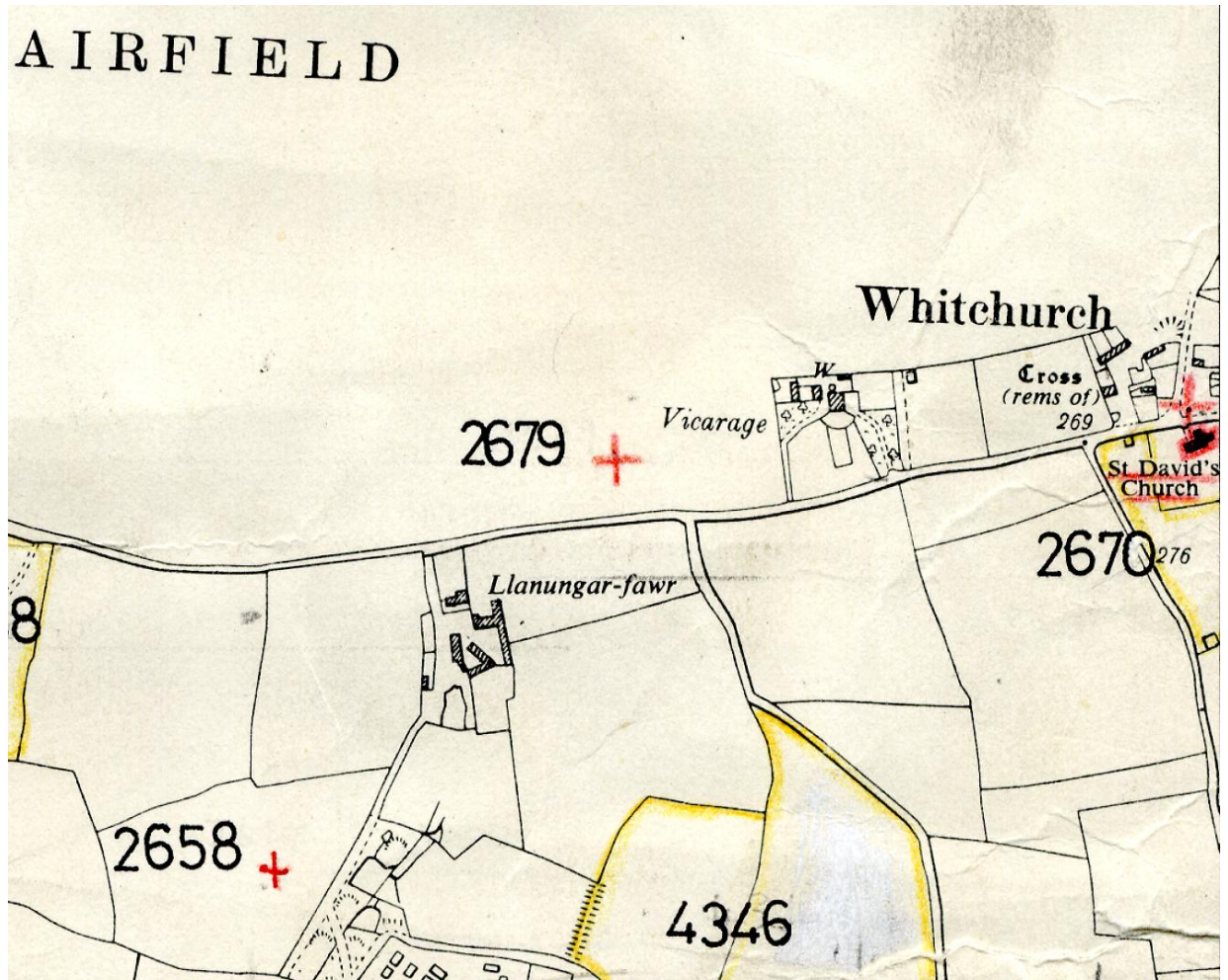


Figure 5: Map Showing Whitchurch area and field of development. The red line marks line of excavation. The red dot shows where the field boundary was encountered. The red crosses show archaeological sites in area.

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Photographs



Plate 1: St David's church view southeast.



Plate 2: shot south west of modern soak away.



Plate 3: Shot Northwest showing possible field boundary or wall footing.

