

Cwm Yard, Gorseinon Watching Brief



Report by: Trysor

For: Mr Phil Lewis

July 2008



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By

Jenny Hall MIFA & Paul Sambrook
Trysor

Trysor Project No. 2007/102

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1. Summary

Trysor undertook a watching brief at Cwm Yard in Gorseinon on 28th May 2008. Ten pits were mechanically excavated, up to a depth of 3m, to provide footings for a steel framed building.

The yard had been used as a coal yard for many years and the yard surface was concrete. Beneath the concrete, thick deposits of 20th century industrial waste and debris were observed, which had been dumped across a wider area by the adjacent (and now demolished) Bryngwyn steelworks sometime during the second quarter of the 20th century.

The industrial debris was seen to overlie bands of natural silty clays and boulder clay.

The pits could not be inspected closely on Health and Safety grounds, but no artefacts were retrieved from the spoil and no features were seen in the pit sections.

2. Introduction

Mr P Lewis of 4, Taliesin Place, Glanymor Park, Loughor, Swansea SA4 6RJ has commissioned Trysor heritage consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief on groundworks for a steel framed building at Cwm Yard, Glanrhyd Terrace, Gorseinon, Swansea, SA4 4AR, under planning application number: 2007/0959

Cwm Yard lies on the southeast side of Gorseinon at SS5912097862.

3. The development

The development consists of the construction of one industrial storage unit replacing a former building on the yard.

4. Conditions on the consent

In granting approval for the application, the Local Planning Authority conditions imposed on the consent; one condition specifies the actions necessary to mitigate the impact of the development on the archaeological resource.

“The developer shall ensure that a suitably qualified archaeologist is present during the undertaking of any ground works in the development area, so that an archaeological watching [brief] can be undertaken to the standards laid down by the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The Local Planning Authority will be informed in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development, of the name of the said archaeologist”

The purpose of the condition is “To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.”

Following the appointment of the contractor, the purpose of the watching brief was clarified by discussion with Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust’s curatorial division who act as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority. According to the Institute of Field Archaeologists’ *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* the purpose of a watching brief is:

- “• to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works*
 - to provide an 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 itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.*
- A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.*

The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on a site.”

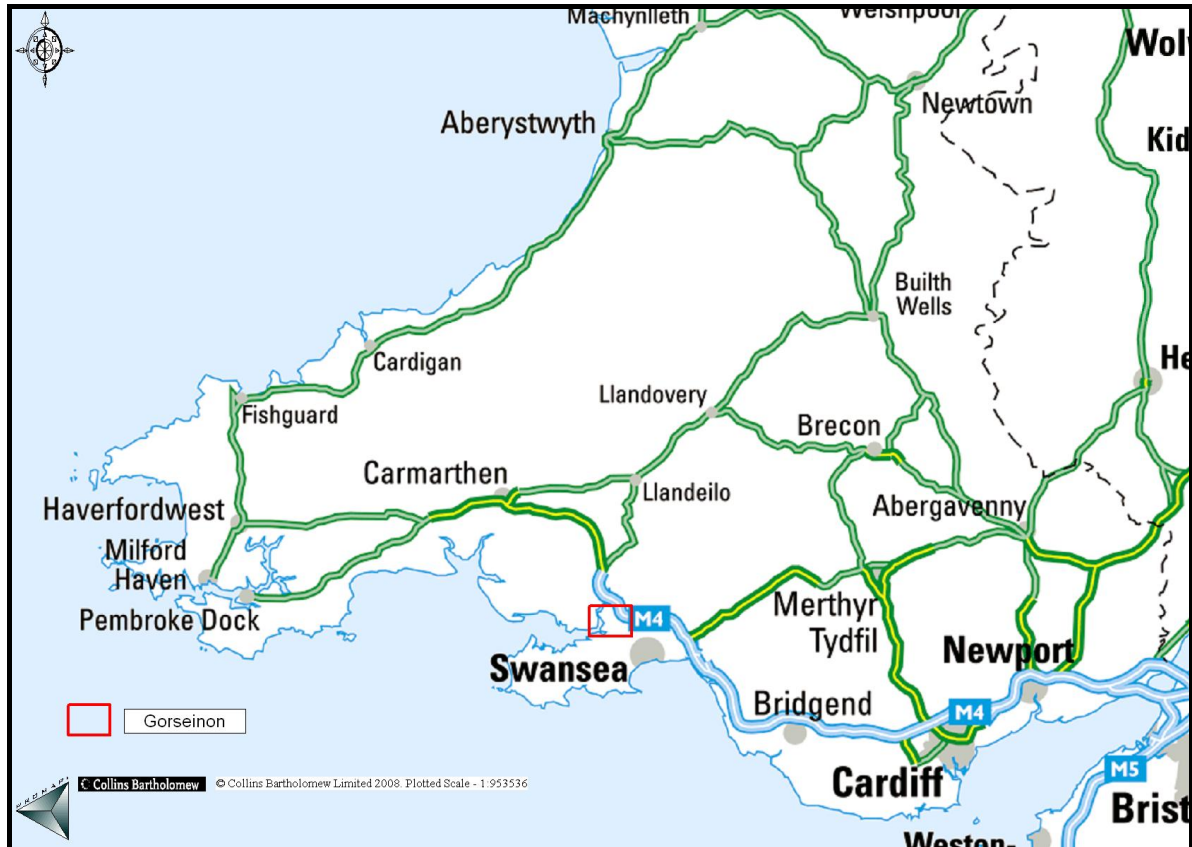


Figure 1: Location of Gorseinon

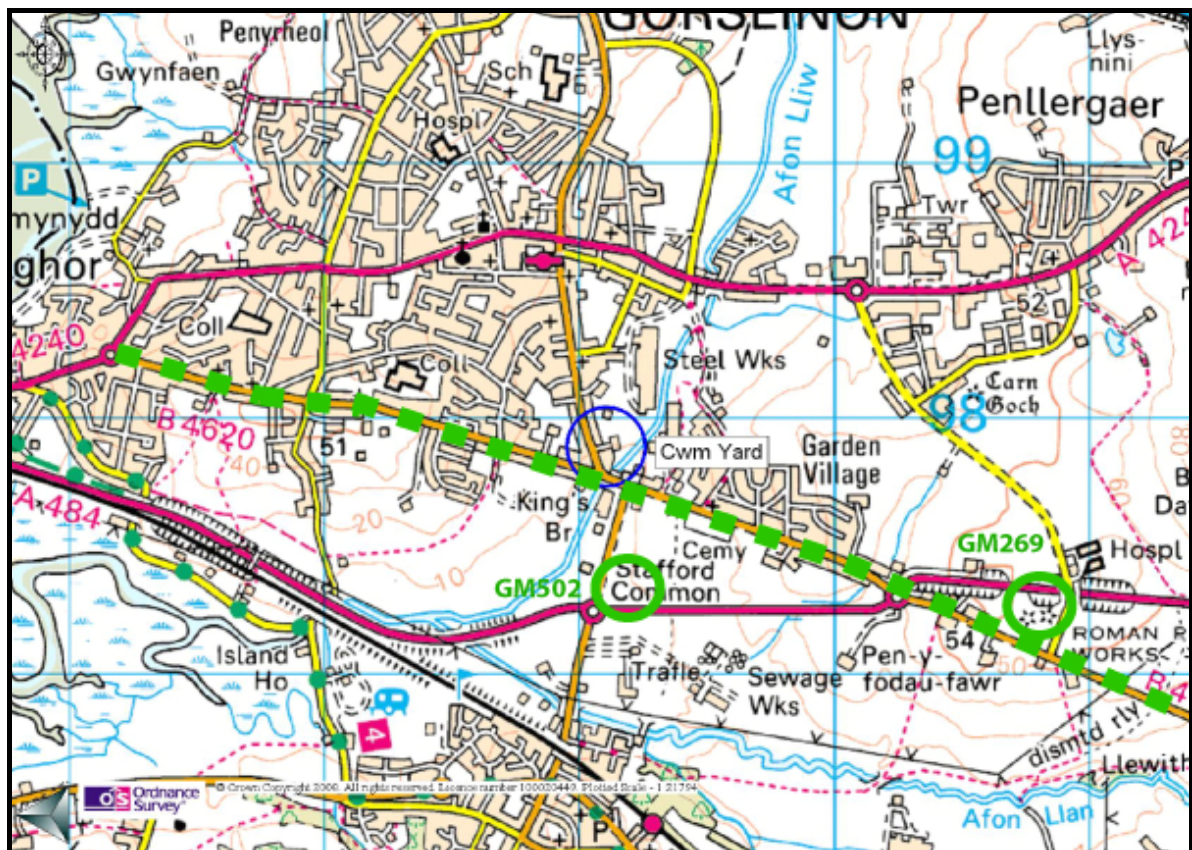


Figure 2: Location of Cwm Yard, showing known Roman archaeological sites. The postulated line of Roman Road RR60d is shown as a dashed green line.

5. Historical Overview

The archaeological watching brief was requested due to the proximity of the development to the probable site of the Roman road, RR60d, from Neath to Loughor, joining the two forts (Evans and Sherman, 2004, p.27). Evidence for Roman activity has been recorded along the road in several places in the Gorseinon area, see table below.

Site Name	Site Type	Location	Scheduled Ancient Monument Number	Historic Environment Record Number	National Monuments Record Number
Loughor	Roman fort	SS56349799	-	00202w	107606
Stafford Common	Roman Practice camp	SS59149731	GM502	00221w	300903
Mynydd Carn Goch	Roman Practice fort	SS60869718	GM269	00382w	305608
Mynydd Carn Goch	Roman Practice fort	SS60779718	GM269	00381w	301349

Cwm Yard itself has been a coal yard for three generations of coalmen since the mid-20th century. It lies 50m to the northeast of the B4620, the postulated line of the former Roman road.

Throughout the 20th century, the site was adjacent to the Bryngwyn Steelworks, which lay to the north and was accessed by the 1950's via Glanrhyd Terrace, which lies immediately to the west of the site.

Within living memory, Bryngwyn steelworks was responsible for depositing considerable amounts of industrial waste and debris across the landscape, including the development area. During mechanical excavation, evidence of this waste material was found in abundance. A local resident supplied oral evidence that during the mid-20th century the steelworks had deposited considerable amounts of waste across the area between Glanrhyd Terrace and the steelworks to the northeast. This process buried the old mill race that flowed from Loughor Mill to the Lliw river and as a result the mill race, which runs outside the eastern edge of the development site, was piped. The burial of the mill race and infilling of its water course, created a flat area of ground which enabled easier access to the steelworks site via Glanrhyd Terrace, from where an access lane ran along the northern edge of the development site. The coal yard itself was built on top of the industrial debris.

In 2008, the irregular polygonal yard area was defined by breeze blocks wall, and surfaced with concrete over most of its area.

6. Effect of development on the archaeological resource

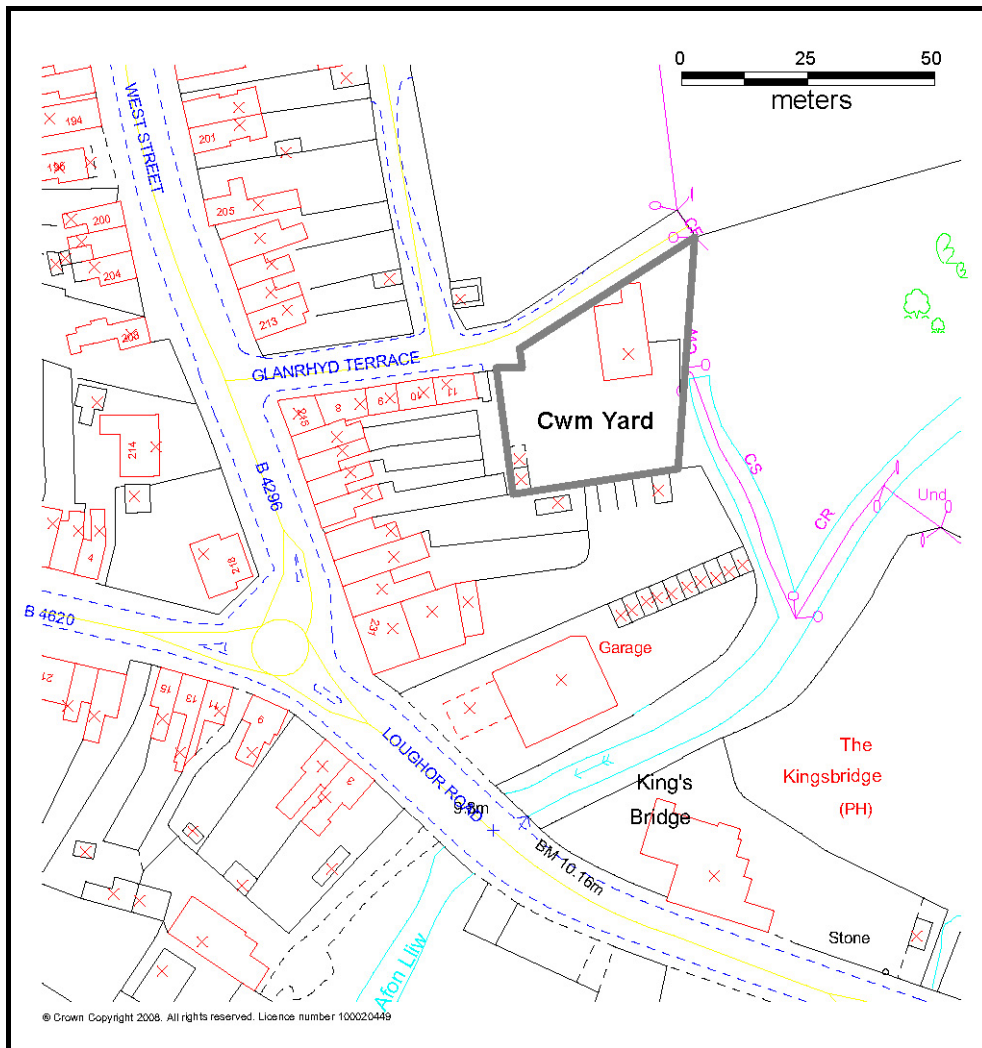


Figure 3: Cwm Yard – detailed location map

The development was restricted to the yard area at Cwm Yard, Gorseinon. A steel framed industrial building was erected within the yard on the site of a former structure. The centre of the new build was approximately SS5912397858.

The proposed new building was 15.24m by 11.89m, with four steel columns on the long sides and three on the short. Each column required the excavation of a foundation pit, immediately filled with concrete. The proposed depth of these pits on the agreed plans was 1.2m.

During mechanical excavation, the subsoil was found to be not load bearing to the necessary degree and the pits had to be extended to a depth of up to 3m, and widened accordingly.

The weather on the day of excavation of the pits was constant heavy rain, and the combination of the weather and the loose nature of the material being cut through made it impossible to inspect the sections of the pits at close hand. However, observations were made and noted. No archaeological features or pre 19th century stratigraphy were recorded.

7. Site Stratigraphy

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. All of the mechanically excavated area was watched and the site stratigraphy recorded in foundation pits.

Pit 1

Context Number	Depth	Description	Interpretation
001	Up to 0.30m	Concrete layer	Coal yard surface
002	c.1.50m	Loose ash, burnt stone and grit mix, red and grey in colour	Industrial waste and debris from Bryngwyn steelworks, deposited in mid-20 th century
003	c.0.40m	Silty Clay	Natural
004	c.0.40m	Sandy Clay	Natural
005	Unknown	Boulder clay	Natural

Pit 2

Context Number	Depth	Description	Interpretation
001	Up to 0.10m	Concrete layer	Coal yard surface
006	Up to 1.0m	Large stone and grit mix, fairly uniform grey in colour with layer of iron pan at its base.	Industrial waste and debris from Bryngwyn steelworks, deposited in mid-20 th century
003	c.0.40m	Silty Clay	Natural
004	c.0.40m	Sandy Clay	Natural
005	Unknown	Boulder clay	Natural

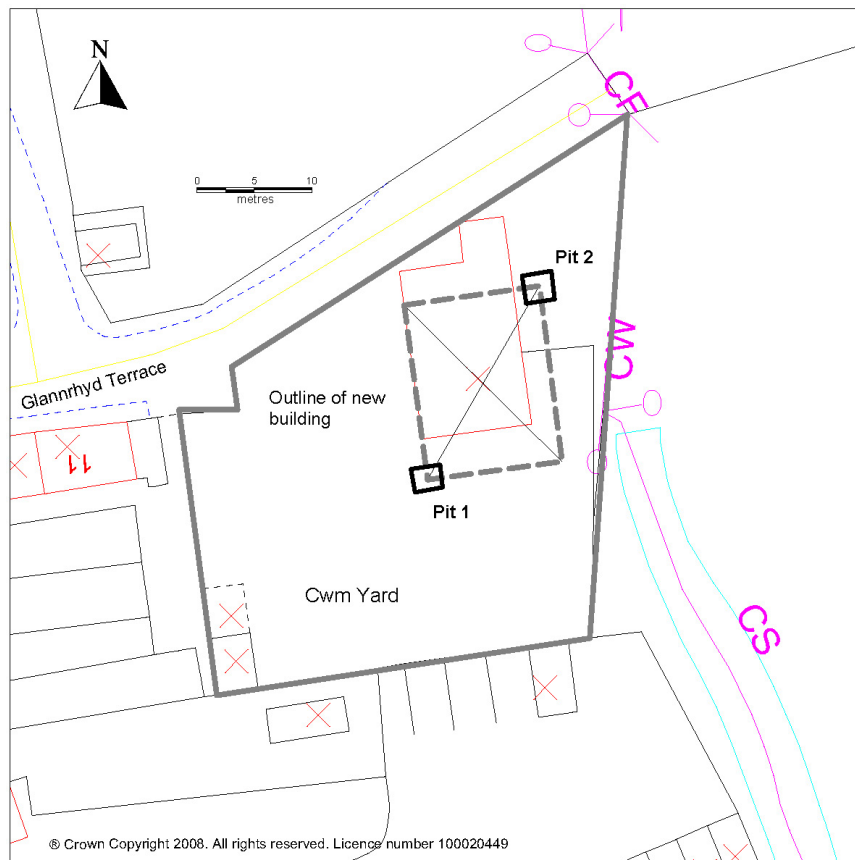


Figure 4: Cwm yard site plan, showing location of proposed building and of the pits referred to above.

8. Photographs

Colour digital photographs were taken of mechanically excavated areas using a 7M pixel camera. The following table describes the content of each photograph included in the project archive and the locations of each provided in the following map. (Fig.5).

Photo Number	Description	Date Taken	Direction
CYG_001	Starting to remove the concrete yard surface, context 001 from the area	28/05/2008	Looking SE
CYG_002	Long shot showing the mechanical excavator working within Cwm Yard	28/05/2008	Looking SE
CYG_003	Partial section of Pit 1 showing the capping concrete, context 001, and the loose layer below, context 002	28/05/2008	Looking SE
CYG_004	Pit 1, showing context 002 (industrial debris) and yellow silty clay below	28/05/2008	Looking ENE
CYG_005	Pit 1, showing context 002 and yellow silty clay below, with scale	28/05/2008	Looking ENE
CYG_006	Pit 2, showing context 001, the concrete and context 006	28/05/2008	Looking NW
CYG_007	Pit 2, showing context 006, overlaying context 003	28/05/2008	Looking SSW
CYG_008	Pit 2, showing the very loose stoney material making up context 006	28/05/2008	Looking SW
CYG_009	Pit 2, showing context 006 overlaying the silty layers contexts 003 & 004	28/05/2008	Looking WSW
CYG_010	Pit 2, showing contexts 006, 003 & 004, with scale	28/05/2008	Looking SSE

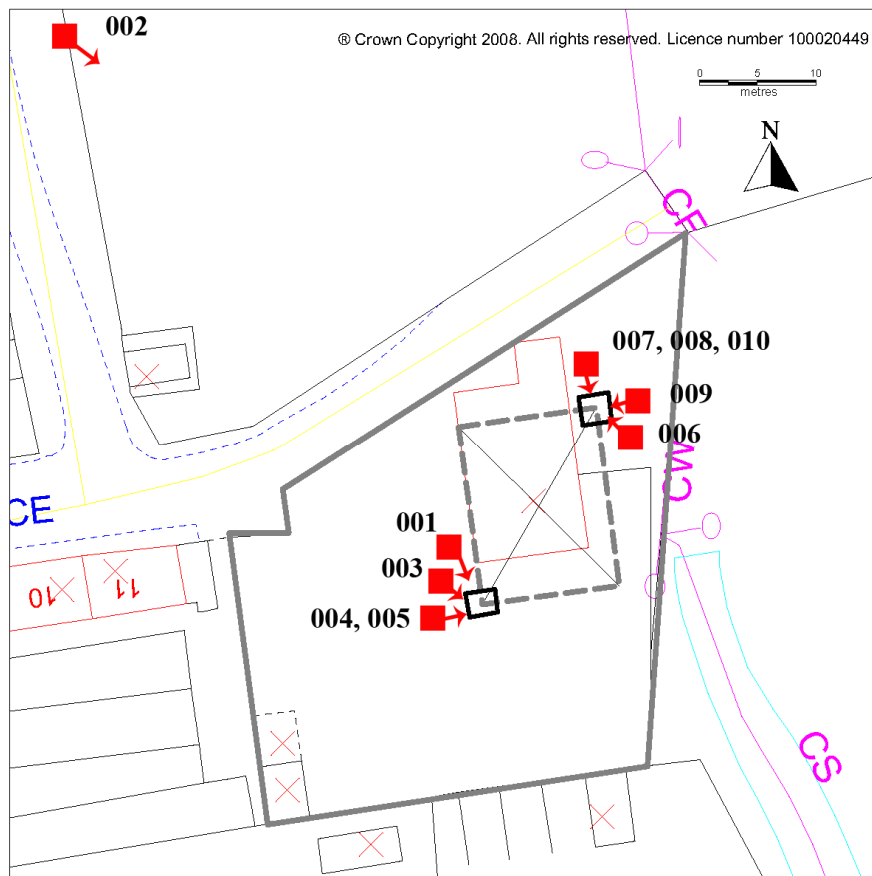


Figure 5: Location and direction of photographs

9. Conclusion

No archaeological artefacts or pre 19th century stratigraphy were recorded. The development area was characterised by a thick deposit of 20th century industrial debris, originating from an adjacent steelworks complex, overlying natural clays and sands.

10. Archive

A paper archive has been deposited with the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth including a copy of this report. The archive includes all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. Photographs are in TIFF format, following the standard required by the RCAHMW.

Further copies of the report have also been supplied to Mr Phil Lewis, and Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust

11. Sources

11.1 Map evidence

1884 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:10560 map

1901 Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:10560 map

1938 Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map

11.2 Unpublished Sources

2004, Evans and Sherman, Roman Roads in Southeast Wales, Desk-based assessment with recommendations for fieldwork.

APPENDIX: PHOTOGRAPHS



Plate 1: CYG001 - Starting to remove the concrete yard surface, context 001 from the area



Plate 2: CYG002 - Long shot showing the mechanical excavator working within Cwm Yard



Plate 3: CYG003 - Partial section of Pit 1 showing the capping concrete, context 001, and the loose layer below, context 002



Plate 4: CYG004 - Pit 1, showing context 002 (industrial debris) and yellow silty clay below



Plate 5: CYG005 - Pit 1, showing context 002 and yellow silty clay below, with scale



Plate 6: CYG006 - Pit 2, showing context 001, the concrete and context 006



Plate 7: CYG007 - Pit 2, showing context 006, overlaying context 003



Plate 8: CYG008 - Pit 2, showing the very loose stoney material making up context 006



Plate 9: CYG009 - Pit 2, showing context 006 overlaying the silty layers contexts 003 & 004



Plate 10: CYG0010 - Pit 2, showing contexts 006, 003 & 004, with scale.