

**LLANSADURNEN PARISH CHURCH,
CARMARTHENSHIRE
(SN 2816 1026)
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

November 2009



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Salem Construction



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Gan / By

ANDREW SHOBBROOK

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19
6AF

Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ffacs: 01558 823133

Ebost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Gwefan: www.archaeologydyfed.org.uk

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire
SA19 6AF

Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Fax: 01558 823133

Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Website: www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

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DIRECTOR: K MURPHY BA MIFA

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Project Commission	2
1.2 Scope of the Project	2
1.3 Report Outline	2
1.4 Abbreviations	2
1.5 Illustrations	2
2 THE SITE	3
2.1 Location	3
2.2 Archaeological Background	3
3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY	3
4 RESULTS	4
5 CONCLUSIONS	5
6 SOURCES	6

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1:	Location map of site based on Ordnance Survey	7
Figure 2:	Extract of 1 st edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map 1889	8
Figure 3:	Extract of 2 nd edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map 1906	9

TABLES

Table 1:	Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales	10
Table 2:	Recorded archaeological sites within close proximity to watching brief area	10

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo. 1:	West facing section of Drainage pipe cut.	11
Photo. 2:	Probable 19 th century grave cut revealed in Drainage cut on south end of church	12
Photo. 3:	View South of possible earlier church wall or foundations.	13
Photo. 4:	View looking north in first trench showing footings of church.	13

LLANSADURNEN CHURCH, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

As part of an ~~extensive~~ new drainage system for Llansadurnen parish church, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN 2816 1026, PRN 17352) it was ~~concluded~~ ~~recommended~~ that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during groundworks in ~~part of~~ the churchyard. ~~This recommendation was placed upon the works by the Diocesan Advisory Committee.~~

~~The proposed watching brief Llansadurnen Church~~ lies in close proximity to a number of sites of archaeological and historical interest that includes sites dating from the prehistoric period ~~up through~~ to the post medieval period. Given that ~~there is the possibility of evidence for an earlier element of the church on its southern side, the watching brief area lies within a site of archaeological interest~~ it was recommended that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during the excavation of the new drainage system ~~in this area.~~

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned to undertake the watching brief in October 2009 by Mr Stephen Kirkwood ~~of Salem Construction.~~

A possible 19th century grave cut and building debris from ~~an episode of~~ the rebuilding of the church were recorded during the course of the watching brief. ~~Also~~ ~~the~~ ~~partial~~ remains of a possible wall foundation ~~or wall~~ which could possibly relate to ~~the~~ ~~an~~ earlier church was revealed through the excavation of a square pit next to the east wall of the chancel.

~~No further archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the excavations.~~

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

~~As part of a~~ During the installation of a new drainage system at Llansadurnen Church, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN 2816 1026; PRN 3910¹) a series of trenches were hand excavated to accommodate drainage pipes. Given that the site was located within an area of known archaeological interest it was recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the course of the groundworks. This recommendation was placed upon the works by the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

To comply with this recommendation, Mr Stephen Kirkwood of Salem Construction, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to undertake the archaeological watching brief in October 2009.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during ~~major~~ episodes of earth moving or ground breaking on the southern side of the church in the vicinity of an area where remains of an earlier church have been mooted.

1.3 Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

1.4 Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER²) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

1.5 Illustrations

Record photographs are included at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

¹ PRN – Primary Record Number, unique identification reference allotted to known archaeological sites, findspots and monuments on the regional Historic Environment Record, held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo

² Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

2 THE SITE

2.1 Location

The site is located at NGR SN 2816 1026 in the centre of the village of Llansadurnen, Carmarthenshire. Topographically the site is set upon a hilltop overlooking Laugharne Marsh and is situated at a height of c. 120m OD.

2.2 Archaeological Background

The present cruciform parish church of Llansadurnen dates largely from the rebuilding of the church in 1859. However, there is suggestion that the building may contain some earlier core fabric (Ludlow, 2004).

Although the church is known to have medieval origins it has been suggested that it may have an early medieval foundation. The dedication of the church to the 'Celtic' saint St Sadyrnin or Saturninus, ~~may~~ also suggests an early foundation. Additionally, the existence of an early Christian monument (PRN 3911) at Llansadurnen church may again ~~suggests~~ an early date for a church or other form of ecclesiastical foundation at the site (Ludlow, 2004). Lhuyd first mentions in 1698 of the existence of the inscribed stones ~~existence~~ and that it ~~were~~ was then incorporated into the south wall of the churchyard. The stone was ~~rediscovered~~ rediscovered in 1920 after being used as a gatepost. The stone is at present standing in the base of the tower at ~~Llansadurnen the church~~. The inscription reads "Of Totavalus son of Dothorantus" (Edwards, 2007). The inscribed stone is the only firm source of evidence that would possibly point to an early medieval origin for the church of Llansadurnen.

~~however, the~~ The fortified hilltop 1km south of the church named Coygan Camp (PRN 7451) contained a high status sixth century settlement positioned on top of the hilltop, which has now been destroyed through quarrying. This, however, this site indicates early medieval activity occurring in the nearby area of the watching-brief church (Edwards, 2007), and provides further credence to the presence of an early medieval ecclesiastical site in the vicinity. The inscribed stone of Parc y Cerrig Sanctaidd, lies 1.2km to the north west of the church is the inscribed stone of Parc y Cerrig Sanctaidd; (Holy stone PRN 9941) which could also be of a possible early medieval origin.

The 'taxatio' of 1291 list Llansadurnen as being a chapelry in the parish of Laugharne. The date at which Llansadurnen becomes a Parish is not known. Ludlow mentions that Llansadurnen village plan is a typical post-conquest vill, which has also some surviving Anglo-Norman field systems (Ludlow, 2004).

3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

Methodology

The watching brief comprised a site visit to monitor groundworks during the hand excavation of a drainage channel on the southern side of the church.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a 3.70m long x 0.31m wide north-south cut trench extending from the south wall of the church to another linear drainage trench running east-west positioned south of the church in the grave yard. The trench was hand dug to a maximum depth of 0.6m.

4 RESULTS

The excavation of the drainage trench revealed dark brown silt clay topsoil, which was 0.15m in depth and contained occasional flecks of mortar. Underlying this layer the topsoil was a mixed mortar layer 0.15m in thickness containing rare pieces of roofing slate and occasional small sub angular stones. This layer appeared to be a building debris layer, which possibly relates to the rebuilding of the church in 1859.

The natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of 0.30m below the top of the churchyard's ground surface grass surface and was comprised a light reddish brown silt clay containing rare flecks of mortar and rare pieces of disarticulated human bone.

A linear line feature measuring 0.41m in width and 0.38m in length was observed to be running northeast to southwest across the trench disappearing under either side. Due to the trench being relatively small it is difficult to discern whether this was a possible grave cut. It was noted that the fill of the feature was a light reddish brown silt clay which contained 40% mixed with mortar, and building debris, perhaps suggesting which would suggest that this feature was possibly created after the post-dates the 1859 rebuilding of the church and that the back fill of the feature fill of the feature has come from the backfilling of the disturbed upper layers included material from the building debris layer seen at a higher level.

The northern end of the trench was excavated up to the church wall and revealed the possible footings of possibly the 1859 rebuild of the church wall.

A second trench was dug and recorded situated by the western end of the church. This trench was again dug to a depth of 0.60m in depth and revealed the same stratigraphic ereographic sequence as of the first. This trench again revealed disarticulated human remains including part of the top of a skull.

Part of a geotechnical test pit was excavated A pit for the engineer to view was excavated by hand on the eastern side of the church and to expose the base of the foundation of the church wall. The pit measured 1.30m running parallel to the church wall and 1.10m out perpendicular east of to the building. The pit was not excavated to a significant depth as it was felt that it had the potential to significantly disturb any underlying deposits and following discussion with the client it was agreed that further discussions should be held with the archaeological advisor to the DAC before it was completed. The southern section of the pit revealed what was possibly is either the foundations of the 1859 church or potentially the foundations of the an earlier much older Medieval church wall, conceivably of medieval date. Unfortunately no dating material was discovered, however and it is not possible to confirm the date of the foundation this hypothesis cannot for certainly be ascertained without further excavation.

No further archaeological features or deposits were revealed.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological watching brief has demonstrated that the churchyard at Llansadurnen still has the potential to contain significant archaeological remains, associated with both the 1859 rebuild of the church and evidence for earlier church building remains. Possible remains of an earlier church wall were recorded in the aborted geotechnical test pit excavated at the eastern end of the church, although the date of this could not be confirmed without further investigation.

A layer of mortar and building rubble was recorded beneath the topsoil which is likely to have derived from rebuilding of the church in 1859.

The drainage trenches were excavated by hand to shallow depths and narrow widths, thereby causing minimal damage to below ground archaeological remains. The main areas of archaeology were exposed in vicinity of the church itself, revealing foundation trenches for existing and possibly earlier walls. Disarticulated human bone was recovered from the subsoil, which is as would be expected in a burial ground which has been used over hundreds of years.

With the exception of the possible wall foundation or foundation cut and material from the rebuilding of the church, ~~n~~No further significant archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the groundworks.

6 SOURCES

Map

Ordnance Survey 1889 1:10560 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXXV SW.

Ordnance Survey 1906 1:10560 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXXV SW.

Ordnance Survey 2002 1:50000 .

Published Sources

Edwards, N.2007. *A Corpus Of Early Medieval Inscribed Stones And Stone Sculptures In Wales. Volume 2 South-West Wales*. University of Wales Press. P.261-3.

Unpublished Sources

Ludlow N 2004 *CADW* .Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites Project. Cambria Archaeology Report Number 2004/2

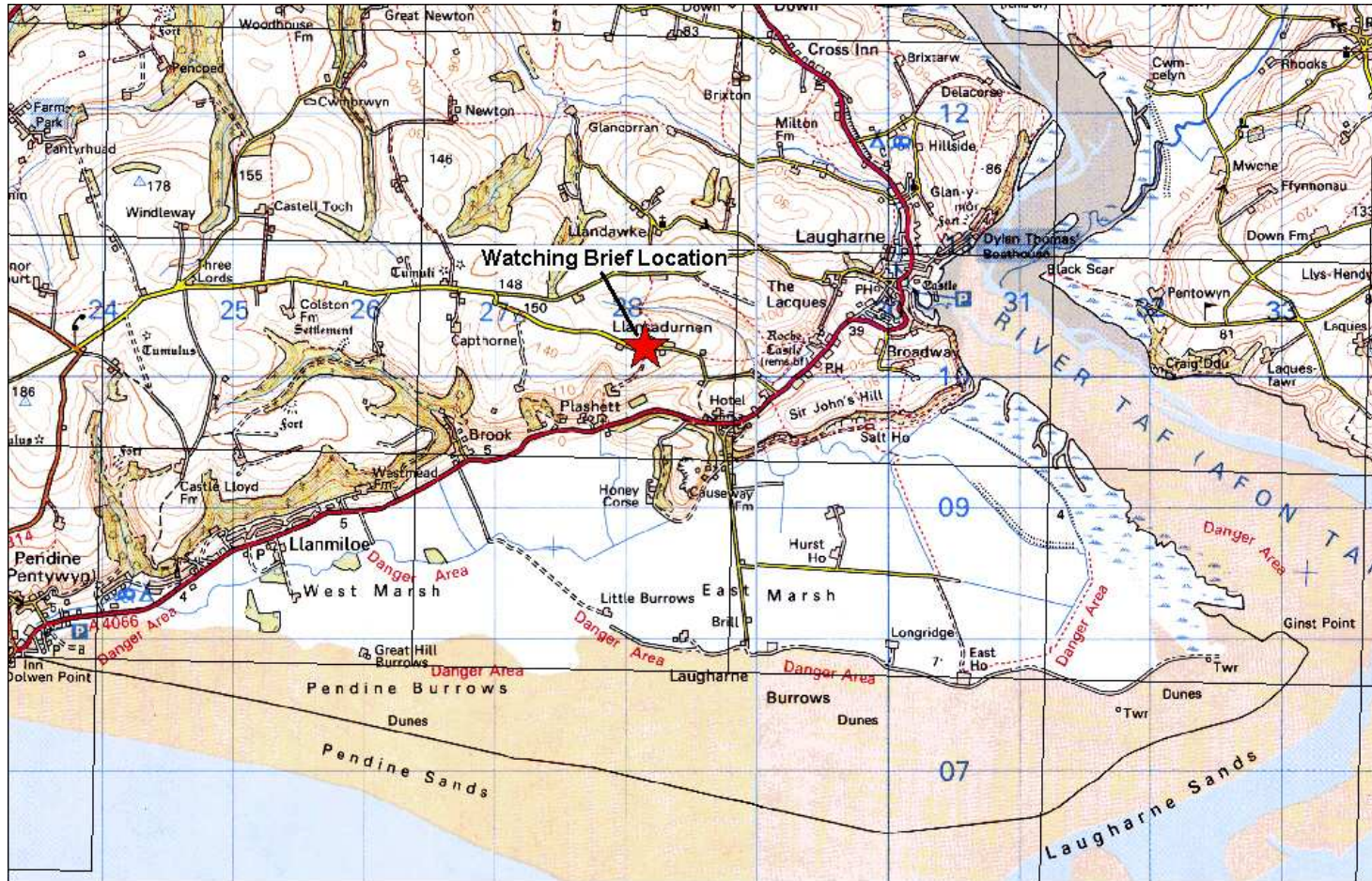


Figure 1: Location map of site based on Ordnance Survey.

Reproduced from the 2002 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

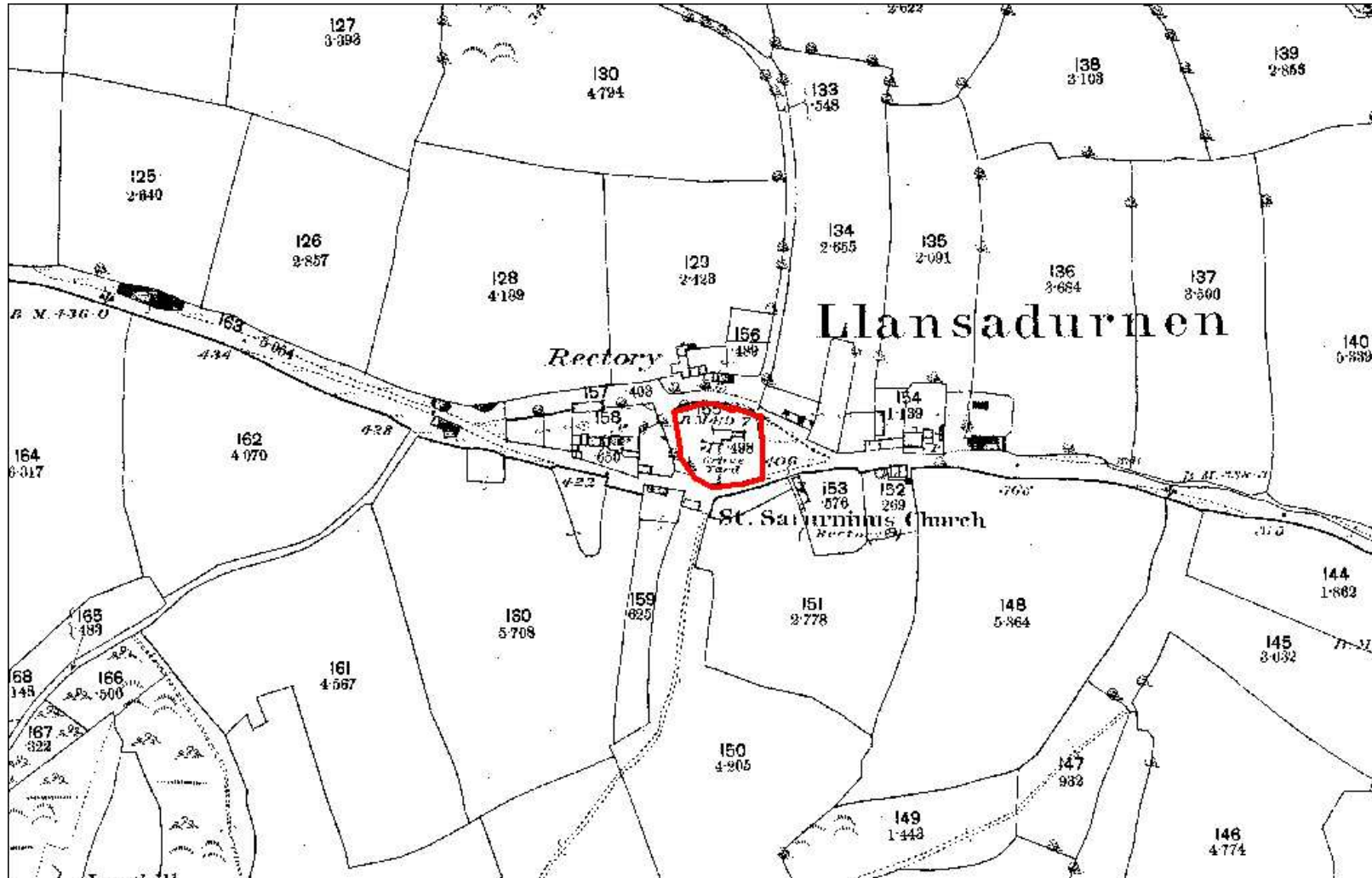


Figure 2: Extract of 1st edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map 1889

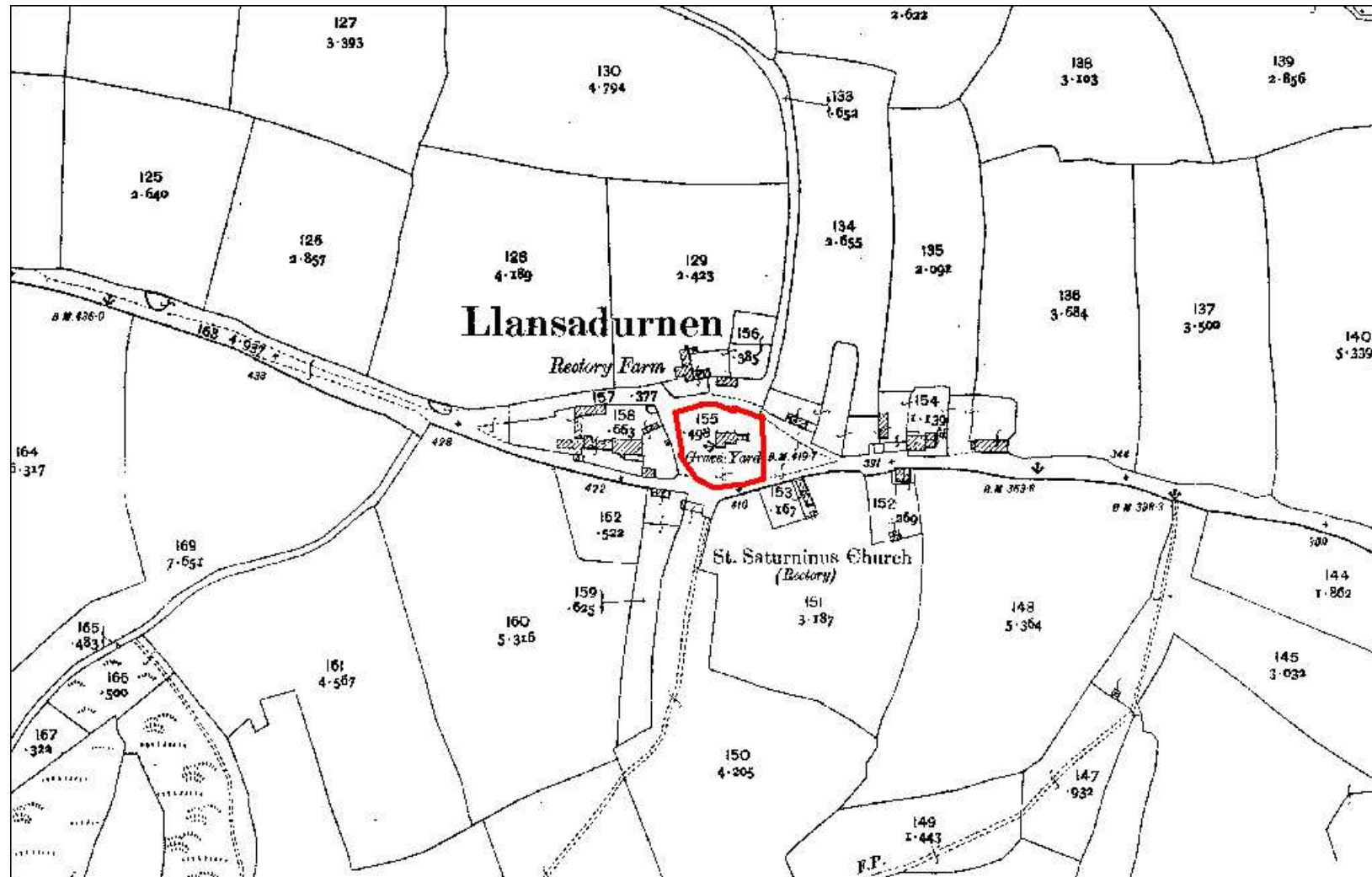


Figure 3: Extract of 2nd edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey Map 1906.

<i>Period</i>	<i>Approximate Date</i>
Palaeolithic	c.225,000 BC – 10,000 BC
Mesolithic	c.10,000 BC – c.3500 BC
Neolithic	c.3500 BC – c.2000 BC
Bronze Age	c.2000 BC – c.600 BC
Iron Age	c.600 BC – 43 AD
Roman	43 AD – 410 AD
Early Medieval	410 AD - 1066
Medieval	1066 - 1485
Post Medieval	1485 – c.1900
Modern	c.1900 onwards

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

PRN	NGR	SITE NAME	FORM	PERIOD
15036	SN28161030	Rectory farm	Building	Post Medieval
17352	SN28161026	Llansadurnen Parish Church	Church	Post Medieval
22339	SN28131018	Robin Leys	Cottage	Post Medieval
22,345	SN282103	Llansadurnen Village	Windmill	Post Medieval
23234	SN28341027	PentreHayes Farm	Findspot	Post Medieval
3910	SN2816410269	Llansadurnen Parish Church	Church (listed building)	Medieval
3911	SN28161026	Llansadurnen Parish Church; St Sadyrnin's	Inscribed stone	Early Medieval
9941	SN26961062	Parc y Cerrig Sanctaidd; Holy stone	Inscribed stone	Early Medieval\Medieval

Table 2: Recorded archaeological sites within close proximity to watching brief area.



Photo. 1: West facing section of Drainage pipe cut.



Photo. 2: Probable 19th century grave cut revealed in Drainage cut on south end of church.



Photo. 3: view South of possible earlier church wall or foundations.



Photo. 4: View looking north in first trench showing footings of church.

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Tachwedd 2009
November 2009

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

Andrew Shobbrook

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist

Llofnod / Signature Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

James Meek

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Head of Field Services

Llofnod / Signature Date

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn*

*As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any
comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report*