

# DINAS, LLANSAWEL CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared  
by  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
for  
Mr Bryn Davies



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# DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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## Dinas, Llansawel, Carmarthenshire Archaeological Watching Brief

By

**Simon Ratty**

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**DINAS, LLANSAWEL, CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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**DINAS, LLANSAWEL, CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**SUMMARY**

*A planning application (E/16572) was submitted to develop a plot of land adjacent to an existing property known as Dinas in Llansawel, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN61933623).*

*The site is located to the west of the medieval church of St Sawyl, Llansawel, which would have formed the nucleus of any medieval settlement. It is also possible that the present church occupies the site of an early medieval church due to the presence of an inscribed stone built into the nave wall of the present church. The churchyard may also have early medieval origins. The proposed development site was also located to the north of the former main road into the village.*

*Given the potential for archaeological remains and deposits to be present on the site planning permission was granted with a condition that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the groundworks for the development.*

*In order to comply with this planning condition Mr Bryn Davies, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Operations to carry out the archaeological watching brief in June 2008.*

*No significant archaeological features or deposits were noted during the course of the archaeological watching brief.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Commission**

Plans to develop a plot of land adjacent to the existing property known as Dinas at Llansawel, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN61933623) required an archaeological watching brief. The development site does not contain any known archaeological sites, although, it is in close proximity to the medieval church of St Sawyl (PRN 1870; NGR SN62033625), which would have formed the nucleus of any medieval settlement at Llansawel. There is also a possibility that the church may have an early medieval origin given the presence of an early Christian inscribed stone (PRN 1820; NGR SN62033625) built into the wall of the nave and the circular form of the graveyard (PRN 49305; NGR SN62033624). A possible holy well, Fynnon Sawyl (PRN 1871; NGR SN61863620), is located a short distance to the west of the site.

Given this potential an archaeological watching brief condition was recommended on this development by the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) archaeological advisor<sup>1</sup>. Mr Bryn Davies commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Services to carry out the archaeological watching brief, which was carried out in June 2008.

### **1.2 Scope of the Project**

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during all major episodes of earth moving or ground breaking, such as topsoil stripping and deep cutting.

### **1.3 Report Outline**

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background (Section 2) before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results (Section 3).

### **1.4 Abbreviations**

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER<sup>2</sup>) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

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<sup>1</sup> Cambria Archaeology Heritage Management Section.

<sup>2</sup> Held and managed by Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo

## 2. THE SITE

### 2.1 Location

The site is located at NGR SN61933623, a short distance to the west of the centre of the village of Llansawel. Topographically the site is located on an east sloping hillside at a height of c.120m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

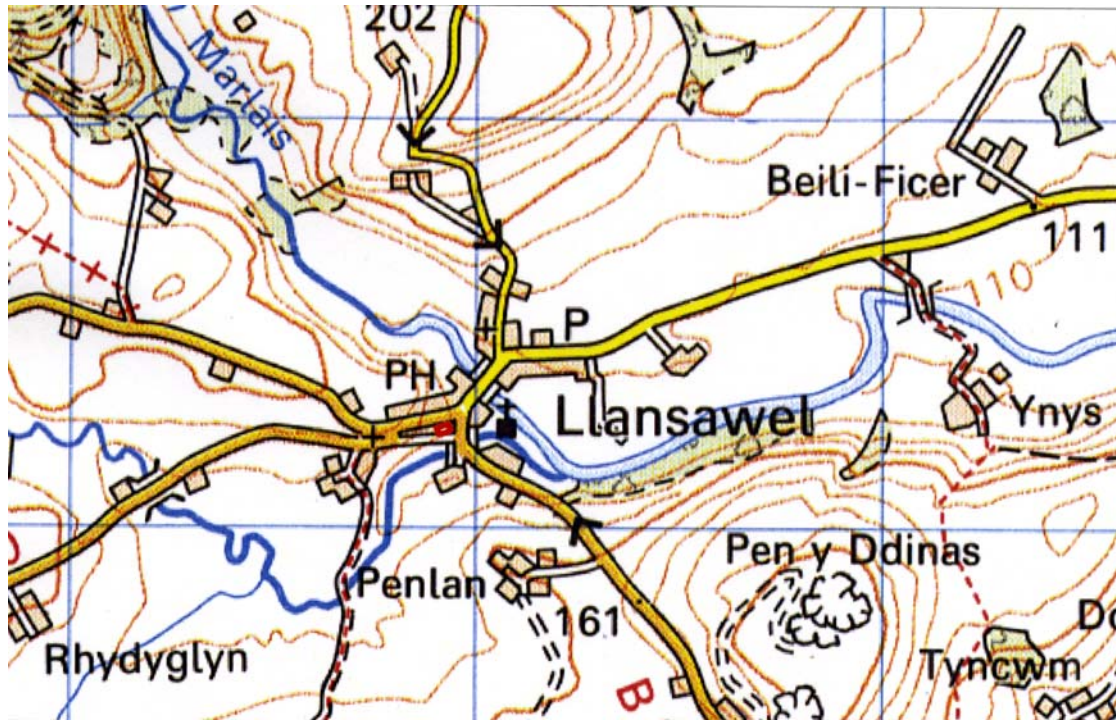


Figure 1: Extract of OS 1:50000 map showing development area in red.

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 Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A.

### 2.2 Historic landscape development

A search of the regional HER revealed no known archaeological sites within the area covered by the watching brief, although it is in relatively close proximity to the medieval church of St Sawyl, which may have early medieval origins, and which would have been the focus for any medieval settlement at Llansawel. The proposed development site also lies in close proximity to Fynnon Sawyl a possible early medieval Holy well and is situated to the north of the former main road into the village of Llanswel.

Map regression has revealed the site has been occupied since at least the late 19th century. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 shows the site occupied by a possible terrace of three structures, with a further possible detached building located to the rear. The second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906 shows that this building had been removed, although the terrace of three structures remains with additions to the rear. These additions probably being outhouses containing lavatories. The western end of the site appears to have remained undeveloped, although a small indeterminate structure is marked in the 1906 Ordnance Survey map.



### **3.SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Watching Brief Methodology**

The watching brief consisted of a site visit to monitor the groundworks being undertaken prior to construction . This consisted of the demolition of a garage of concrete block construction, which was located to the south of the existing property. Further works involved the demolition of a stone retaining wall and the removal of a 3m high bank behind which formed the garden of Dinas. A flight of modern steps was also removed.

#### **3.2 Watching Brief Results**

The stone retaining wall was noted to be c.0.9m wide and survived to a maximum height of c.1.70m. The wall was not mortared, but bonded with a dark greyish brown clay silt of moderate compaction. Fragments of modern china were noted in the bonding material of the wall but were not retained. Additional finds of a number of mineral water bottles were also made. These dated from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and included two 6oz capacity Codd bottles, which used a glass ball to seal the bottle. The name refers to Hiram Codd who patented the design in 1872. The bottles were manufactured by Rylands of Barnsley for the Old Quarry mineral water works, which were once located on North Road Lampeter. A further discover of a 6 oz Niagra bottle, also manufactured by Rylands Barnsley, but for Davies Aerated Water Works of New Quay was made. Whilst similar in form to a Codd bottle the Niagra bottle utilised four retaining lugs as opposed to two found on a standard Codd to trap the glass ball whilst pouring the contents. A broken internal screw stoppered bottle of J Edwards Mineral Water Works, who had offices at 17 Carmarthen Street Llandeilo was also recovered. These gradually superseded the Codd bottle from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to them be easier to clean and it is possible the retaining wall dates from this period, given that it was recovered from within the wall make up.

Once the wall had been demolished and excavation had commenced it quickly became apparent that the stratigraphic sequence was consistent across the site with a topsoil horizon (1000), of maximum depth 0.37m and comprising of a dark grey brown silty clay of moderate compaction, containing 10% small subangular stones. Finds of china fragments and modern glass were noted within the top[osil but were not retained. The topsoil overlay a natural subsoil (1001), which consisted of a mid yellowish brown sandy clay of firm compaction and containing c.30% small subangular stones.

No significant archaeological features or deposits were noted during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

**Sources**

Ordnance Survey 1887 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1:2500 map

Ordnance Survey 1906 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1:2500 map

Ordnance Survey 1997 Landranger 1:50000 map









Plate 1: Section through retaining wall following demolition.



Plate 2: Surviving length of retaining wall alongside former main road into Llansawel.





Plate 3: Modern steps prior to demolition.





Plate 4: Section through garden following demolition of retaining wall.



Plate 5: General working shot showing site stripping in progress.

# Dinas, Llansawel, Carmarthenshire Archaeological Watching Brief

**REPORT NUMBER 64767**

**June 2008**

This report has been prepared by Simon Ratty

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This report has been checked and approved by Nigel Page  
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have on the content or presentation of this report