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AHAC 6009

Part 1

# Archaeological Excavation at Llanllyr, Ceredigion. 2016/17

| Contents                    | Page |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Site location               | 3    |
| Site description            | 4    |
| Excavation extent: duration | 5    |
| Bore hole grid references   | 6    |
| Test pit context table      | 7    |
| Test pit context data       | 8    |
| Brief discussion            | 13   |
| Appendix                    | 14   |
| References                  | 15   |

## List of images

- 1 & 2, Location of Llanllyr on ordnance survey map.
- 3, Estate map of Llanlleir demesne dated 1768.
- 4 & 5, Geological map of area.
- 6, 7 & 8, Test pits at Llanllyr.
- 9 & 10, Borehole locations on map of area.
- 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, section drawings of test pits.
- 16, piece of timber in test pit 9
- 17, 18, 19 & 20, section drawings of test pits.
- 21, Failed attempt at plotting test pits on digimap

## Site location

Llanllyr is an estate situated in the Aeron valley in Ceredigion West Wales. Situated on low lying fertile lands approximately seven miles inland from the coastal town of Aberaeron and 500m metres south of the village of Talsarn. The river Aeron passes close by on its journey to Aberaeron.



Image 1

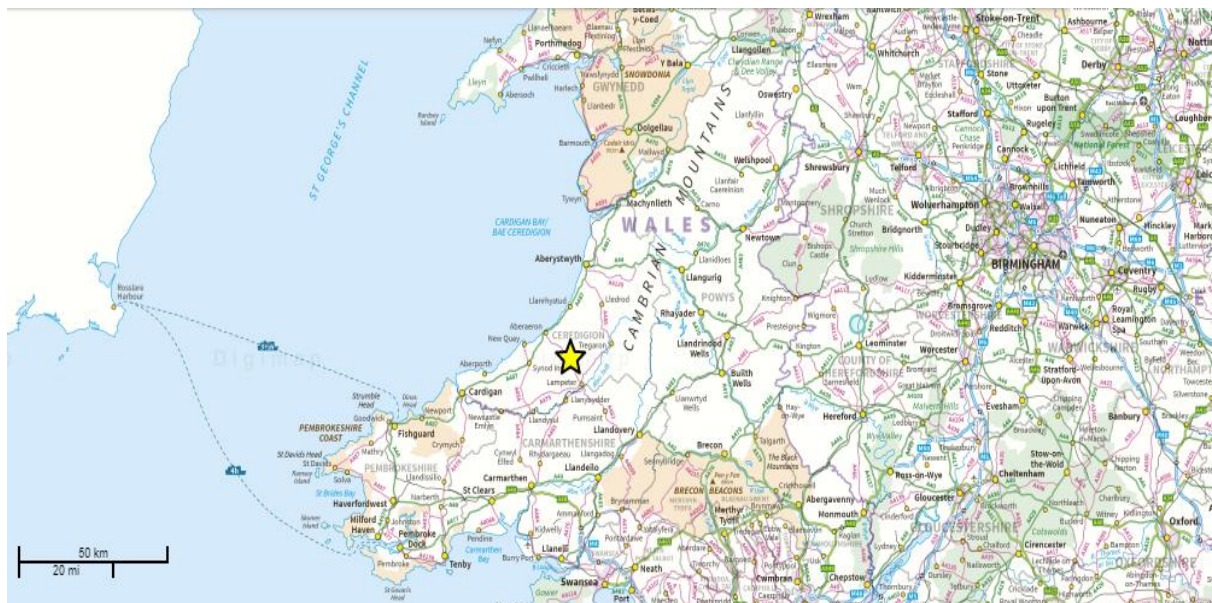


Image 2

Yellow star denotes the area where Llanllyr is located in West Wales, United Kingdom.

## Site description

Llanllyr has a long history dating back to the twelfth century when a nunnery was founded by Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd as a daughter house of the Cistercian monastery of Strata Florida (Murphy & Wilson 2015). Llanllyr did not escape the Dissolution of the Monasteries and its own dissolution took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1537 (Gee 2010:25). Since then the fertile lands have been made use of by Elizabethan squires profiting from the Dissolution, Victorian gentry and present day farmers (Gee 2010).



Image 3

Estate map of Llanlleir Demesne dated 1768 (Dyfed archaeological trust)

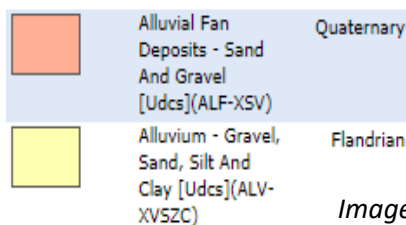


Image 4

Llanllyr lays on Flandrian deposits of alluvium gravel, sand, silt and clay with the surrounding area being made up of quaternary alluvial fan deposits with sand and gravel (Digimaps).

### Linear Features



Image 5

#### Excavation Extent: Duration

The excavations carried out at Ilanllyr happened over 3 separate occasions for a maximum of three weeks, one in 2016 and two in the summer of 2017. All excavations were carried out by students supervised by the Lampeter campus archaeology staff from University of Wales Trinity St David.

Twenty-one bore hole samples were taken under the supervision of Martin Bates and a total of fifteen test pits were dug at varying depths to suit ground conditions and deposits. Test pits were two metres square by 1.2 metres deep where conditions allowed. Once turf was removed by hand and set aside for reinstatement, test pits were hand dug with mattock and trowel and taken down in 5cm spits with steps formed for access. Weather conditions varied from sun to rain wind and gales.

Test pit measuring two metres square with turf removed and set aside for future replacement.



*Image 6 & 7* Test pit hand dug with formed steps, continued water ingress determined form of test pit.



*Image 8*, Completed test pit measuring two metres square with maximum depth of 1.2 metres. Steps formed and dug to suit ground conditions in damp weather.



Of the 21 bore hole samples that were taken data at the time of this report was only available for 19 these are plotted below in red with the use of Digimaps.

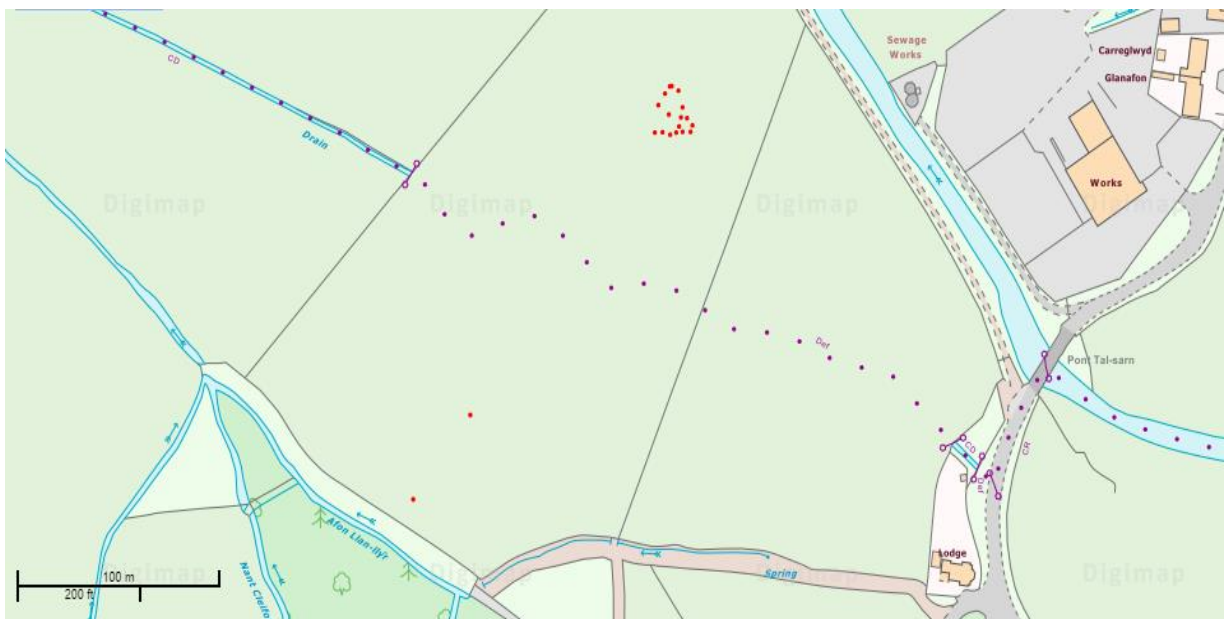


*Image 9*

Cursor Grid references for bore holes: BH 1 SN 54259/56282, BH 2 SN 54257/56289, BH 3 SN 54250/56288, BH 4 SN 5425056279, BH 5 SN 54261/56287, BH 6 SN 54353/56291, BH 7 SN 54258/56278, BH 8 SN 54261/56277 BH 9 SN 54264/56274, BH 10 SN 54257/56274, BH 11 54256/56271, BH 12 SN 54259/56271, BH 13 SN 54263/56271, BH 14 SN 54247/56283, BH 15 SN 54253/56270, BH 16 SN 54249/56271, BH 17 SN 54245/56271, BH 18 missing, BH 19 missing BH 20 54155/56149, BH 21 SN 54127/56112.

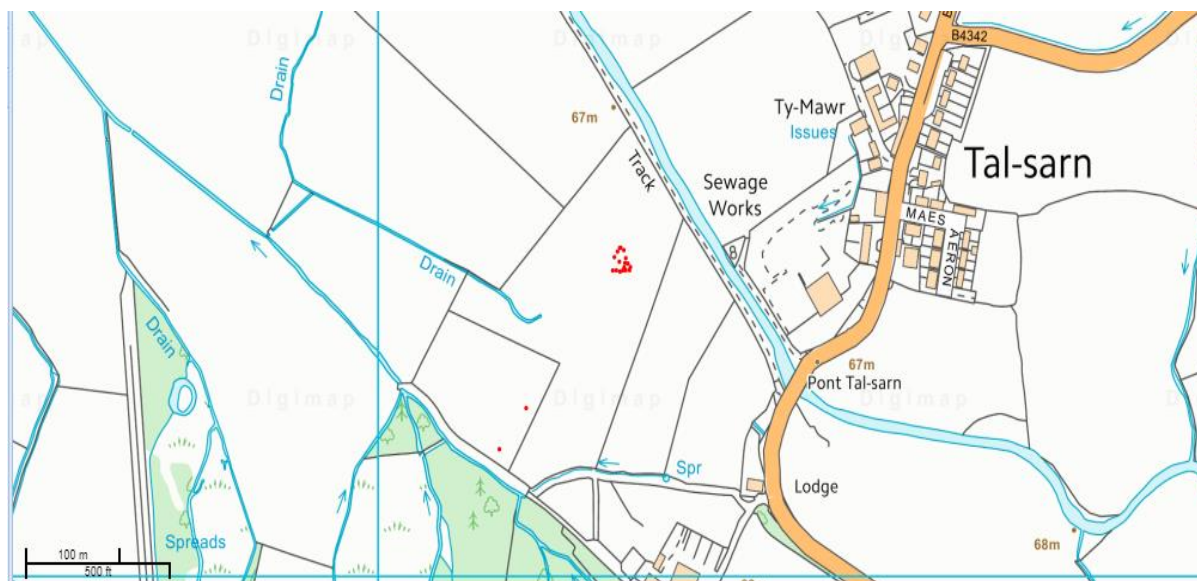


Image 10

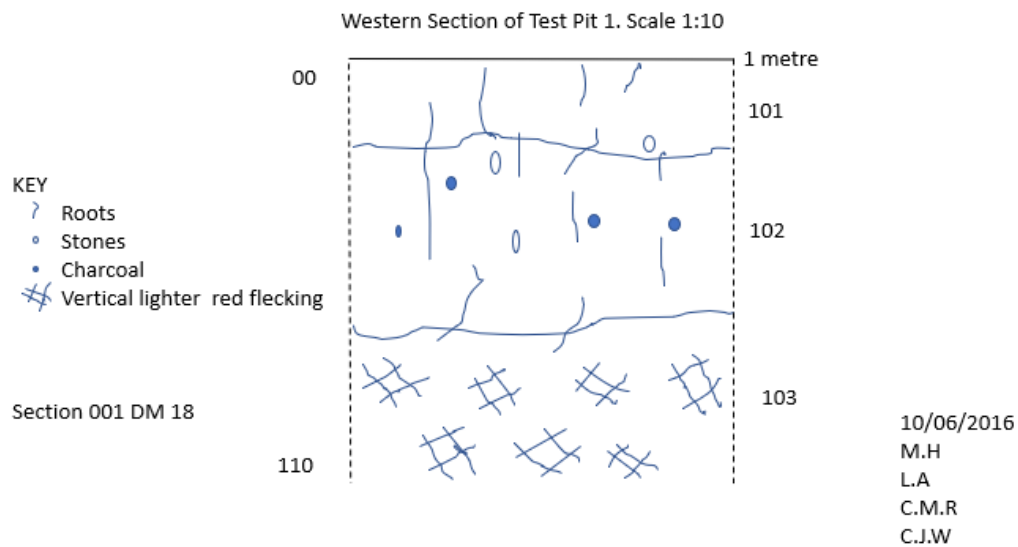
Test pit context table

| TP1 | TP2 | TP3 | TP4 | TP5 | TP6 | TP7 | TP8 | TP9 | TP10 | TP11 | TP12 | TP13 | TP14 | TP15 |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 101 | 201 | 301 | 401 | 501 | 601 | 701 | 801 | 901 | 1001 | 1101 | 1201 | 1301 | 1401 | 1501 |
| 102 | 202 | 302 | 402 | 502 | 602 | 702 | 802 | 902 |      | 1102 | 1202 | 1302 |      | 1502 |
| 103 | 203 | 303 | 403 | 503 |     | 703 | 803 | 903 |      | 1103 | 1203 | 1303 |      | 1503 |
| 104 | 204 | 304 | 404 | 504 |     | 704 | 804 | 904 |      | 1104 | 1204 | 1304 |      |      |
| 105 | 205 | 305 | 405 | 505 |     | 705 | 805 | 905 |      | 1105 | 1205 | 1305 |      |      |
| 106 | 206 | 306 | 406 | 506 |     | 706 | 806 | 906 |      | 1106 |      | 1306 |      |      |
| 107 | 207 | 307 | 407 | 507 |     | 707 |     | 907 |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| 108 | 208 | 308 | 408 | 508 |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|     | 209 | 309 | 409 | 509 |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|     |     | 310 | 410 | 510 |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|     |     |     | 411 | 511 |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|     |     |     | 412 | 512 |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |
|     |     |     | 413 | 513 |     |     |     |     |      |      |      |      |      |      |

Of the 15 test pits context sheets were available for all but two of the test pits, these were test pits ten and fourteen. Test pit 6 revealed a cobbled floor in context 602 at a depth of 38cm which was then hand trowelled and exposed.

Auger data was collected from seven of the test pits, TP1, TP2, TP3, TP5, TP7, TP9 and TP11. Test pit 1, contexts 105-108, test pit 2 contexts 205-209, test pit 3 contexts 305-310, test pit 5 contexts 506-513, test pit 7 context 705-707, test pit 9 context 907 and test pit 11 contexts 1105-1106 are all auger data.

Image 11

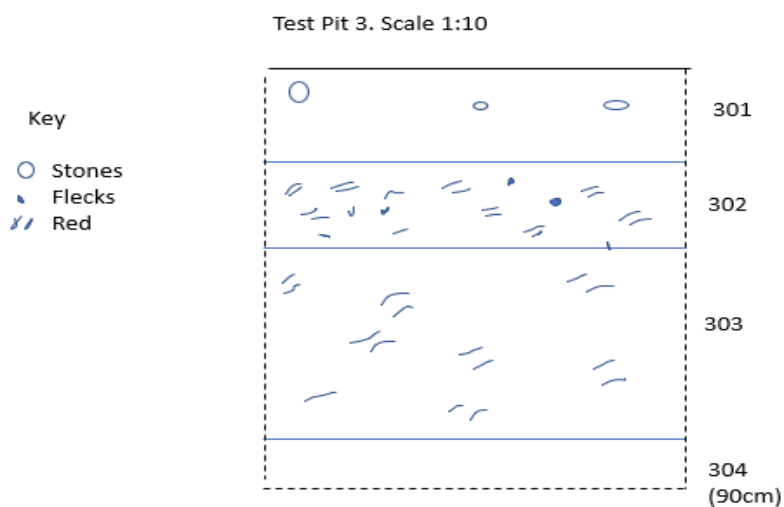


Test pit 1 with few inclusions. Silty soil grain size with varying colour context 101 light grey, 102 mid reddish brown and 103 red in colour, all contexts moderately compact.

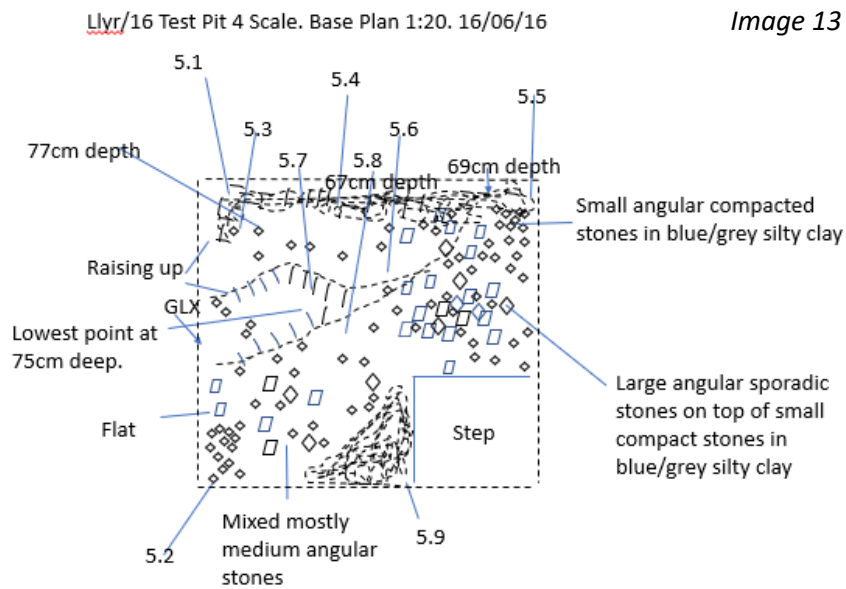
Test pit 2 all moderately compact, context 201, down to 28cm consisted of silty clay grey brown in colour. Context 202, 28-50cm brown grey silty clay, context 203 50-85cm light brown silty clay and context 204 85-119cm consisted of grey clay.

Test pit 3 context 301, 20cm consisted of a silty sand light grey in colour above context 302, 20-38cm silty clay grey brown in colour with red flecks. Contexts 303 and 304, 38-78cm & 78-116cm consisted of silty clay grey in colour getting darker with depth also with flecks of red.

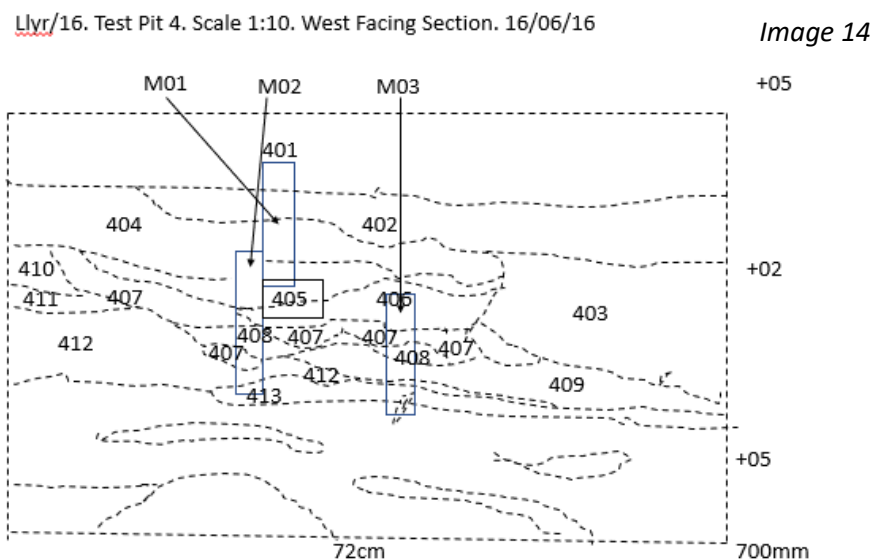
Image 12



Test pit 4 consisted of 13 contexts with contexts 401, 402 and 403 consisting of pale grey compact clay. 404 and 405 were pale yellowish moderately compact clay, pale grey moderate to firm clay in 406. Context 407 was made up of loose grey gravel with the underlying contexts 408, 409 and 410 being pale yellowish moderately firm clay silt. Context 411 pale grey compact silt with contexts 412 grey clay dense silt above 413, dense grey clay.



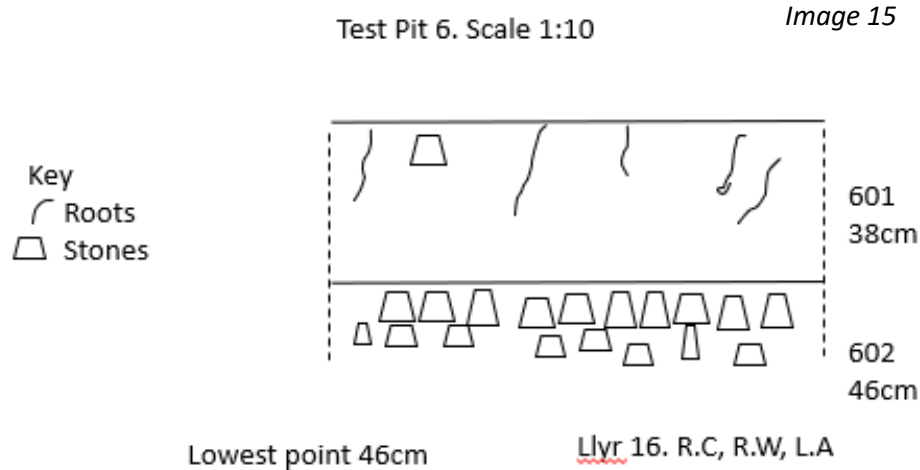
Base plan for test pit 14



Test pit 4 west facing section.

Test pit 5, context 501, 25cm in depth grey silty clay, context 502, 25-70cm, 503 70-105cm and 504, 105-115cm all reddish brown silty clay (compaction unknown). Context 505 consisted of compact orange yellow clay.

Test pit 6 consisted of 2 contexts the first 601 to a depth of 38cm was greyish brown moderately firm sand. Context 602 38-46cm was made up of a cobbled floor covered in moderately firm grey silty sand.



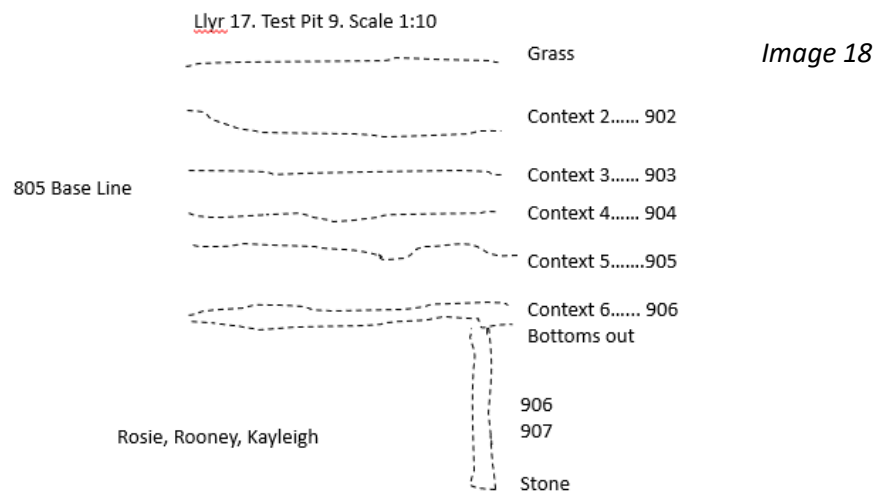
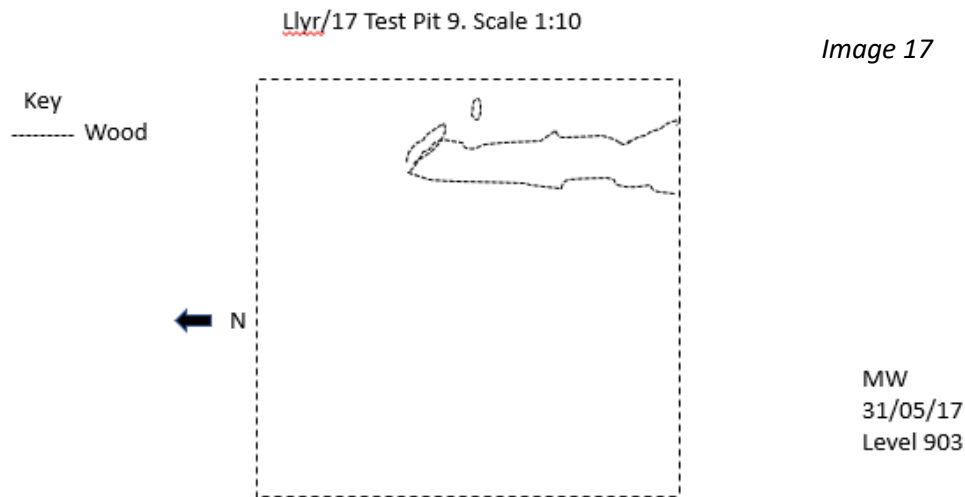
Test pit 7, context 701 depth 20cm consisted of moderately compact light grey silty clay, 70,2 20-46cm firm orange brown clay/soil. Context 703, 46-71cm was fairly loose grey clay/soil. 704, 71-82cm was dark grey loosely compacted gravel soil. Contexts below were augered to a depth of 137cm and consisted of grey gravel loose above very firm below.

Test pit 8, context 801, depth 20cm firm greyish brown silt. 802, 20-36cm firm light brown silty clay. 803, 36-74cm compact orange grey clay. 804, 74-101cm firm orange grey silty clay. 805 101-13.5cm firm grey clay and 806 loose grey silty gravel.

Test pit 9, context 901, compact light brown topsoil to a depth of 26cm. 902, 26-50cm loose orange brown sandy material. 903 50-59 cm, dark grey compact clay with wooden feature (see below).



Context 904, 59-68cm very loose dark grey gravel. 905, 68-88cm grey compacted silty clay. 906 depth not available compacted grey clay. 907 augered for a further 60cm consisted of compacted orange silty clay.



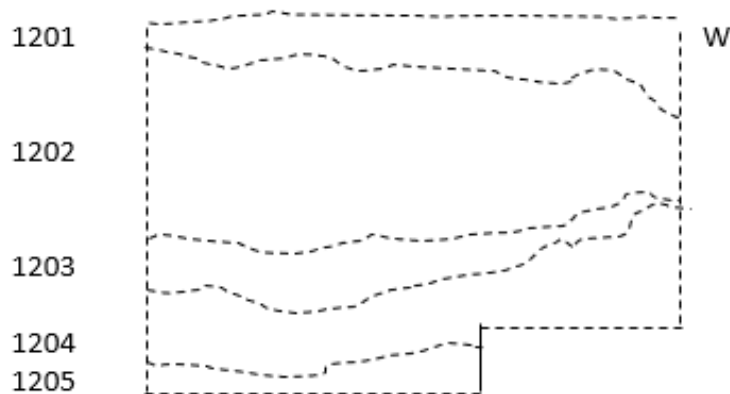
Test pit 10 has no available context sheets

Test pit 11, context 1101, 24cm depth loose grey brown silty clay. 1102, 24-45cm firm reddish brown clay. 1103. 45-118cm wet firm grey clay. 1104, 118-120cm firm grey clay. 1105, 120-157cm firm yellow brown clay. 1106, 157-170cm grey gritty clay. Contexts 1105 and 1106 augered.

Test pit 12, context 1201 24cm loose grey brown sandy soil. 1202, 24-50cm firm yellow brown silt. 1203, 50-66cm loose grey clay. 1204, 66-96cm firm red brown clay. 1205, 96-103cm firm black brown clay.

Llvr/ 17. Test Pit 12. Scale 1:10. 27/7/17  
North facing

Image 19



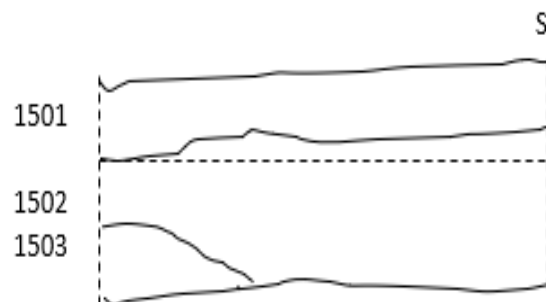
Test pit 13, context 1301, loose grey brown sandy soil. 1302, firm grey silt (20cm thickness). 1303, loose brown black silt, 1304, firm brown clay. 1305, firm black clay. 1306, moderately compact yellow clay.

No data for test pit 14.

Test pit 15, context 1501, 23cm loose brown sandy soil. 1502, 23-72cm firm grey brown soil. 1503 72-110cm loose orange clay.

Llvr/ 17. Test Pit 15. Scale 1:10. 27/7/17

Image 20



Cloudy, Rain, Sun.  
West facing section

All test pits apart from test pits 4,6 and 9 were of similar silty clay alluvial conditions which varied in colour. Test pit 4 initially consisted of clay above silty conditions with evidence of high energy flow gravel indicating a river feature. Test pit 6 consisted of a cobbled floor at depth of 38cm with sandy conditions above. Test pit 9 again consisted of clay above a bed of gravel in context 904 at a depth of 59cm with silty conditions below. All ground conditions are typical of the geology of the area as shown in figure

## Appendix

Image 21



Attempt at locating test pits on Digimaps, something just doesn't look right, not sure if I had right coordinates,



Talsarn-contexts  
13.pdf

## References

Gee, LL. 2010. A Very Small Corner of Paradise: The Story of Llanllyr, A garden in Wales. Y Lolfa. Ceredigion.

Murphy, F & Wilson, H. 2015. Llanllyr, Ceredigion Archaeological Evaluation 2014: Interim Report. Dyfed Archaeological Trust, <http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/projects/llanllyrinterim.pdf>  
[accessed 8/4/2018]

## List of images

1 & 2, Digimaps

3, Dyfed Archaeological Trust

4 & 5, Digimaps

6, 7 & 8, Jon Morgan

9 & 10, Digimaps

11, 12, 13, 14 & 15, Lampeter University

16, Jon Morgan

17, 18, 19 & 20, Lampeter University

