

Fig. 1. Eglwysrwr - location maps.

St Cristiolus' Churchyard, Eglwysrwr, Pembrokeshire: a Post-Conquest Cist Cemetery

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SUMMARY. Excavations and a watching brief at St Cristiolus' churchyard, Eglwysrwr, in 1996, revealed forty-six medieval inhumations. Twenty-six were stone-lined 'long-cist' burials while twenty were simple dug graves, one of which exhibited coffin staining. The fills of two of the cist graves, and a feature cut by one of the dug graves, produced pottery datable to the late twelfth or thirteenth century at the earliest. The burials appear to occupy a fairly short time-span, and give a late date to a burial practice normally thought, in west Wales, to be early medieval. The extent of the contemporary cemetery/churchyard was not determined, but the alignment of the burials suggested that the present southern churchyard boundary had remained relatively constant, although it may have lain within a larger burial enclosure. The present churchyard may occupy the site of a Bronze Age cemetery, represented by one arc of the quarry-ditch for a possible round barrow. An extensive spread of nineteenth-century made-up ground was cut by a rectilinear feature which may relate to the robbing of a tomb or structure — possibly the churchyard chapel noted in early sources.

The term 'post-Conquest' refers to the Norman conquest of South Wales, and in the Pembrokeshire context denotes 'after AD 1100'.

INTRODUCTION

St Cristiolus' Church (NGR SN 1420 3849) lies at the centre of the village of Eglwysrwr, Pembrokeshire, 7.5km south-west of the town of Cardigan. It occupies a gentle north-west facing hillside running down to the Nant Hafren, a small tributary of the Afon Nyfer which flows north-west towards Newport Bay (Fig. 1). The solid geology comprises Ordovician shales of the Ashgill Series, which are overlain by drift deposits of fine, orange, fluvio-glacial gravels and localised boulder clays.

The churchyard lies at the west end of a gentle spur, at an average height of 130m OD. It is now a fairly large, sub-triangular enclosure, raised above its surroundings on all sides and accentuated to the west and south by a slight, but fairly wide bank. It is revetted by a wall of local slate manufacture, repaired and replaced over many periods. That to the south was, until replaced in 1996, of good quality early twentieth-century construction. There are now two entries, the main entrance defined by a pair of slate pillars to the south-west, and a simple gap in the middle of the north-east boundary (Fig. 2).

The church is centrally located at the highest point of the yard, the ground falling gently away on all sides except to the east. It has been suggested that this 'mound', natural or otherwise, was formerly more pronounced, the yard having been partially infilled at some period (Lewis 1972, 93), a suggestion which receives some archaeological support.

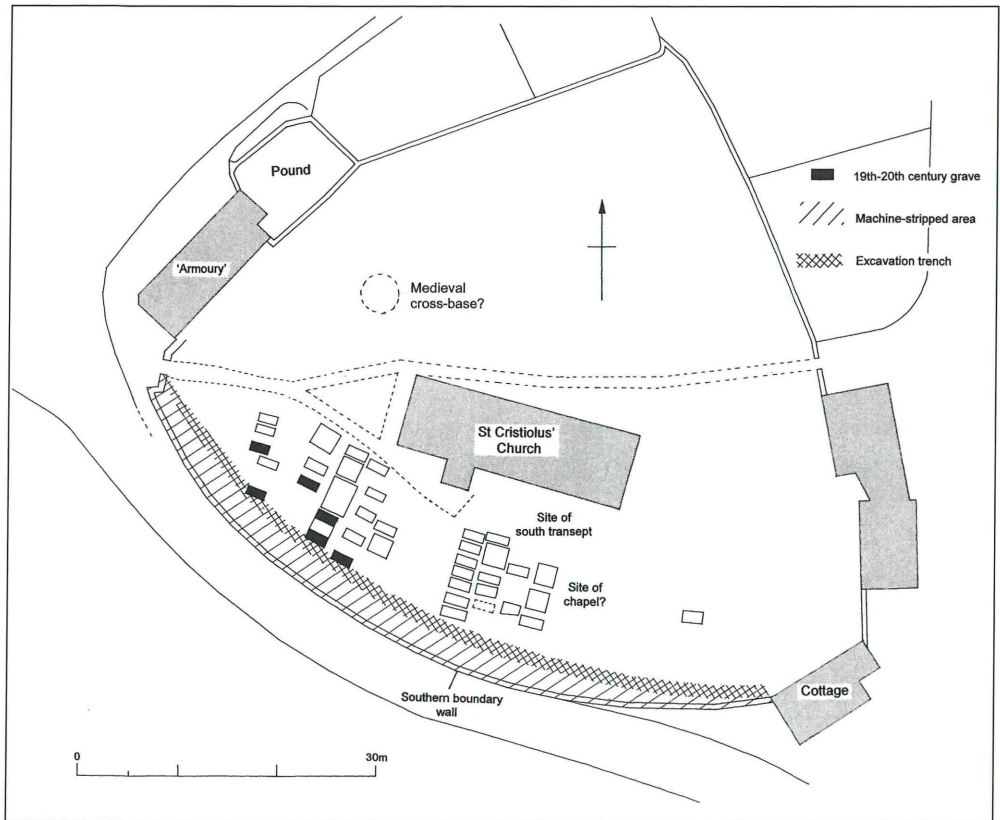


Fig. 2. Eglwysrwr churchyard.

HISTORY

Eglwysrwr lay within the medieval barony of Cemais (or 'Cemaes'), which appears to have been coterminous with the early medieval Cantref Cemais, one of the so-called 'Seven Cantrefs of Dyfed'. It was brought under Anglo-Norman control in c.1100 by the (Fitz)Martin lords, but native tenurial systems were largely maintained. The Martins held on to the barony – with one short period of Welsh re-occupation – until 1326, when they were succeeded by the Audleys. After 1536, the barony was administered as the Hundred of Cemais, but in 1543 the demesne lands and such jurisdictional rights as had survived the Act of Union were sold by Lord Audley to the Owens of Henllys who continued to style themselves 'Lords of Cemais' (Howells 1977, 2). The celebrated Elizabethan topographer, George Owen of Henllys, was a late sixteenth-century lord of Cemais.

THE MANOR OF EGLWYSRWR

The Manor of Eglwysrwr was held, from at least the thirteenth century onwards, as a sub-lordship of the Barony of Cemais (Owen 1897, 517). It maintained its own manorial court baron every fifteen days and a biannual court leet (Charles 1947-8, 278), while certain feudal rights and obligations persisted into the twentieth century. It comprised one knight's fee, worth 100s

(Howells 1977, 35). By the thirteenth century it had become united, as a single holding, with Little Newcastle and Cefnllymwydd (Fishguard), both also in Cemais, which together formed three knight's fees (Owen 1897, 461). However, its early post-Conquest history is vague. It has been suggested that Rhys ap Gruffudd, after reconquering Cemais in the late twelfth century, conferred the entire holding on one of his daughters, as 'a third part of Cemais' (Howells 1977, 39). This daughter is supposed to have married one Jordan de Cantington, but the sixteenth-century source for this information, George Owen, may be confused with the marriage of Rhys's daughter Angharad to William Martin, Lord of Cemais. The barony was re-acquired from the Welsh in 1204, but the name Jordan de Cantington does not appear on documents until the later thirteenth century, when he appears to have been lord of the manor of Eglwysrwr (Fenton 1811, 350; Pritchard 1907, 50-51). The 'great wood' of Pengelli, 1km north-west of the present village (Fig. 1), was always part of the manor and may even have provided its original name — a 'lord of Pengelli' was recorded, before 1231, in the grant of a nearby chapel (Davies 1946, 364 No. D.499).

Jordan had been succeeded by William de Cantington before 1284 (Owen 1897, 454). The knight's fees at Eglwysrwr, Little Newcastle and Cefnllymwydd were acquired from this William by David Martin in 1302 (Owen 1897, 458). David Martin was the brother of William Martin, Lord of Cemais c.1284-1324, and was consecrated Bishop of St David's in 1296 (Willis-Bund 1902, ii). However, his presence at Eglwysrwr was purely in his role as a secular lord of the manor, within his family's Cemais lordship. The Martin lineage became extinct in 1326 when the Barony of Cemais passed to the Audleys, via a female heir (Owen 1897, 461). The sub-lordship of Eglwysrwr was henceforth held in demesne by the lords of Cemais, along with Pengelli Wood (Howells 1977, 54), and in the sixteenth century, was in the inheritance of the Owen lords of Henllys (Charles 1947-8, 278).

The *caput* of the sub-lordship of Eglwysrwr, under David Martin, is supposed to have been at Court Farm, on the fringes of Pengelli Wood less than 1km north-west of the present village (Fig. 1). It was described by George Owen in the late sixteenth century when it was no longer a manorial centre, and was ruinous, but 'huge walls and rooms of great breadth, all environed within a strong and deep moat' could still be seen (Charles 1947-8, 251). It appears to have become a mere tenant farm at an early date (Fenton 1811, 292). The earthwork remains of a motte-and-bailey castle, known locally as Castell Penllyn, lie at the west end of the present village (Fig. 1) and may represent an earlier *caput* that was superseded by Court Farm in the early thirteenth century, after the Barony had been re-acquired from the Welsh.

Eglwysrwr was an important economic centre. Of the four markets and fairs held within Cemais during the sixteenth century, three were held at Eglwysrwr (Owen 1897, 506). By this time, at least, a settlement had developed, which was described as 'a village' (Howells 1977, 54). Eglwysrwr continued to be an administrative centre throughout the sixteenth century and beyond. The manor was responsible for levying the militias of the Hundreds of Cemais and Cilgerran. The musters were held near a specially-constructed armoury which is said to have stood next the churchyard (Charles 1947-8, 279), and are commemorated in the name of 'The Serjeants' Inn', an eighteenth-century building west of the church.

THE PARISH CHURCH

The presence of a church at Eglwysrwr is suggested by the use of the place-name 'Egloisserou' in the later thirteenth century (Charles 1992, 42; Fenton 1811, 350). However, it is first

specifically mentioned in Pope Nicholas's *Taxatio* of 1291, when it was a parish church appropriated to the nearby Tironian abbey of St Dogmaels (Record Commission 1802, 272). Neither the donor, nor the date at which it was acquired by the abbey, are known. However, William de Cantington had granted one half of the Cefnllymwydd knight's fee at Fishguard to St Dogmaels between c.1244 and 1284 (Pritchard 1907, 50-51), and is traditionally regarded as the donor (Lewis 1972, 90).

The rectory was valued at £4 in the *Taxatio*. Like most churches in west Wales, it was considered poor enough to be exempt from the clerical subsidies of the early sixteenth century (Isaacson 1917, 800, 826), and in 1506 the chancel was recorded as ruinous through the neglect and 'incontinence' of the vicar, while the windows were 'unglazed' (Pritchard 1907, 91). In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 the vicarage was valued at £12. 2s. 8d., along with the subordinate chapels at Pengelli Fychan, which formerly stood near Court Farm, and Llanfair Nant-gwyn, 2km to the south-east (Green 1911, 293).

The church is now dedicated to St Cristiolus, Confessor, said to be the son of Hywel Fychan ap Hywel Faig ab Emyr Llydaw, and brother of St Rhystyd (Baring-Gould and Fisher 1908, 190). However, its original dedication is not clear. There are only two other Cristiolus churches, both in Wales: Llangristiolus in Anglesey, and Penrhydd, which lies just 10km south-east of Eglwysrwrw (ibid.), confirming the presence of his cult in the region. However, the earliest association between Cristiolus and Eglwysrwrw appears to be recorded in 1811, in Carlisle's *Topographical Dictionary* (Baring-Gould and Fisher 1909, 215), the same year in which the renowned local antiquarian Richard Fenton gave the dedication as 'St Erw' (Fenton 1811, 291). The latter tradition was followed by Lewis in his *Topographical Dictionary* of 1833 (Lewis, 1833), but the Cristiolus association appears to have become fixed by the later nineteenth century.

The dedication, as usual, was not given in the *Taxatio*, but the sixteenth-century George Owen consistently attributed it to 'St Erow' (i.e. Erw), to whom the sixteenth-century chalice is also dedicated. The place-name evidence alone would suggest that the church was dedicated to St Erw, or '(G)wrw', whose only association is with Eglwysrwrw and whose sole reference is within the *Demetian Calendar* (S), Cwrtmawr MS 44 in the later sixteenth century (Baring-Gould and Fisher 1909, 215). Here, the saint is described as 'virgin', which may be significant in view of the fact that the Welsh for virgin is (*g*)wryyf, and so the name itself may be a back-formation. The saint's day is said, in the *Calendar*, to have been October 21, but significantly again it was celebrated, at Eglwysrwrw, on November 3 – which is the feast of St Cristiolus. The 'virgin' association is interesting and it may be that the dedication in fact belongs to the Marian cult celebrated elsewhere within the district, including Ffynnon Fair, a well situated just to the west of the present village (Fig. 1). It may also be noted that in west Wales, 'Eglwys' normally occurs only in association with a dedication to the Virgin Mary, or with an adjective. A cemetery chapel dedicated to 'St Erow', apparently detached, was recorded in the churchyard by George Owen in the late sixteenth century, in which 'the tomb of the saint, in hewed stone, is extant in the south side ...' (Charles 1947-8, 278). This appears to represent a *capel-y-bedd* – a late medieval chapel constructed over an earlier saint's (or founder's) grave — but a Mary dedication would be unusual in this context. However, in a further twist Owen also recorded that 'the parishioners will not bury ... in the chapel ... for some corpses ... were thrown out ... in the night-time and therefore they hold the opinion that their holy saint will not have any bedfellows with him ...', possibly representing reluctance to disturb a founder's grave, but perhaps perpetuating the tradition of virginity.

The origins of the church are also unknown, but the region has a rich early medieval ecclesiastical tradition. St Brynach's at Nevern – the mother church of Cemais – lies just 4km to the west. It features an important group of Early Christian monuments (ECMs), of which the cross-carved stone and free-standing cross, both from the tenth or eleventh century, confirm the monastic origins that are suggested by the sources (James 1987, 68-9). St Dogmaels was the site of 'Llandudoch', another pre-Conquest monastery (Davies 1982, 142), while the presence of ECMs at a number of other local churches suggests early origins. It may be that the parochial framework within Cemais perpetuates early medieval divisions.

There may also be a secular dimension to the early medieval settlement. Sambrook (1997) has identified seven potential settlement *foci* within the sub-lordship of Eglwysrwr, corresponding with Glanville Jones's model of the early medieval 'multiple estate' (Jones 1976, 15-40). Although still controversial, the model may suggest that the sub-lordship was a very long-standing administrative division. Furthermore, local tradition has it that the native princes of Cemais surrendered to the Anglo-Norman Martin lords 'near Eglwysrwr' in c.1100 (Anon. 1875; Pritchard 1907, 27), suggesting that the holding had a recognised status.

However, there is no evidence that the church at Eglwysrwr occupies an early medieval site. In fact the place-name 'Henllan', 2km west of the village (see Fig. 1), may represent the site of a pre-Conquest church that was re-established on the present site when the Manor of Eglwysrwr was formalised in the early thirteenth century.

LATER HISTORY

In 1537, after the Dissolution, St Dogmaels Abbey and its appurtenances were leased by the crown to John Bradshaw of Ludlow. He paid £7 6s 8d annually for the rectory of Eglwysrwr (Green 1911, 293). The crown retained the advowson, made all subsequent presentations, and had re-acquired the rectory by the later sixteenth century (Charles 1947-8, 278).

A date-stone lying loose in the church records a rebuild or restoration in 1756, and further rebuilds took place in 1829 and 1883 (Lewis, 1972, 92). The vestry was added in 1930 (NLW Church in Wales Records, SD/F/159). A school was founded within the former south transept in 1844, which was demolished in 1883 (Lewis 1972, 206; NLW Church in Wales Records, SD/F/158).

No registers earlier than 1813 have survived, but burial is occasionally recorded in the bishop's transcripts, now held at the National Library of Wales (Lewis 1972, 172). At Eglwysrwr, there was an average of nine burials a year between 1677 and 1818.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The church comprises a nave, chancel, south porch and a western vestry (Fig. 2 and Fig. 14). None of the visible fabric, which is all in locally-quarried slate rubble, appears to be any earlier than the nineteenth century (Ludlow 1998). However, with the exception of the south transept, the earlier church was of similar plan and appears to have occupied the same footprint. Fenton, writing in 1811, described it as a 'low plain building, without tower or any decoration within or without', and considered it to be a fundamentally medieval building (Fenton 1811, 291). Eleven fragments of locally-manufactured ridge tile, recovered during excavation, suggest that the church was slate-roofed at some period during the Middle Ages. Another, thicker tile fragment may represent medieval flooring material. Wall-plaster was also recovered.

The church, as rebuilt in 1829, is shown in architects' drawings of 1883 (NLW, Church in Wales Records, SD/F/158). Fenton's description appears largely to have still applied, but the few windows were all timber sashes, the roof trusses were simple collar-rafters and there was a neo-Classical bellcote at the west end. The 1883 restoration, by Middleton & Son of Cheltenham, was extensive. The south transept, which was roofless and apparently derelict, was finally demolished yielding fragments of dressed stone of 'medieval date including a mullion' (RCAHMW 1925, 94). New openings, with oolitic limestone surrounds in the high-Victorian neo-Gothic tradition, were inserted throughout; the south porch was added and the bellcote was replaced with the present neo-Gothic structure. All the facework now visible appears to be from this restoration.

There is no above-ground evidence for the churchyard chapel 'of St Erow' described by George Owen in the late sixteenth century (Charles 1947-8, 278). Owen did not give its precise location but this building, rather than the south transept, may have been the 'part of the old church ... on the south side of the present church' described in 1875, and the 'site of chantry' marked in the same location on the OS 1:2500 first edition of 1889 (Fig. 2). A square earthwork north-west of the church, apparently featuring some loose masonry, may represent a medieval cross-base. Built against the western churchyard boundary are a sub-rectangular cattle/sheep pound, probably from the early nineteenth century, and a masonry building known locally as the 'Armoury'. This occupies the supposed site of the sixteenth-century armoury, but it contains no fabric any earlier than the mid eighteenth century.

THE EXCAVATIONS

The churchyard lies at the junction of the A487(T) and B4332 roads. Due to road-traffic safety fears, it was proposed to widen the B4332 by demolishing the southern churchyard wall and cutting back a 4m-wide strip down to road level (Fig. 2).

MODERN FEATURES

Six modern burials, dating from 1880 to 1964, occupied the affected area (Fig. 2). In addition, three unmarked burials, probably from the nineteenth to early twentieth century, were encountered at various stages of the project. All were cut through a thick deposit of building debris, 006, which was banked up behind the churchyard southern boundary wall to an average depth of 1m (Figs. 4, 8 and 9). The deposit did not contain any dating evidence but was clearly late, and appears to represent made-up ground, possibly derived from the 1829 church rebuild/restoration.

The churchyard boundary retaining wall, 002, comprised local slate rubble probably quarried from the Glogue area, 10 km southeast of Eglwyswrrw. It was apparently rebuilt during the 1920s or early 1930s (H. Davies, churchwarden, pers. comm.), following the line of an earlier boundary depicted on nineteenth-century maps, and it cut through the made-up ground 006. However, burials were apparently observed in section during the works.

The made-up ground was also cut by two large, vertical-sided intrusions. One formed the south-west corner of a rectilinear feature, 003, that ran beyond the edge of the excavation (Fig. 3). It was excavated to a depth of 1.70m but the bottom was not found. The fill comprised building debris, mixed in with disturbed churchyard material, and the feature may represent a robbed-out building or tomb. The second feature, 004, contained a similar fill but was cut from a lower level. Too little was observed to enable it to be characterised.

St Cristiolus' Churchyard, Eglwysrwr, Pembrokeshire

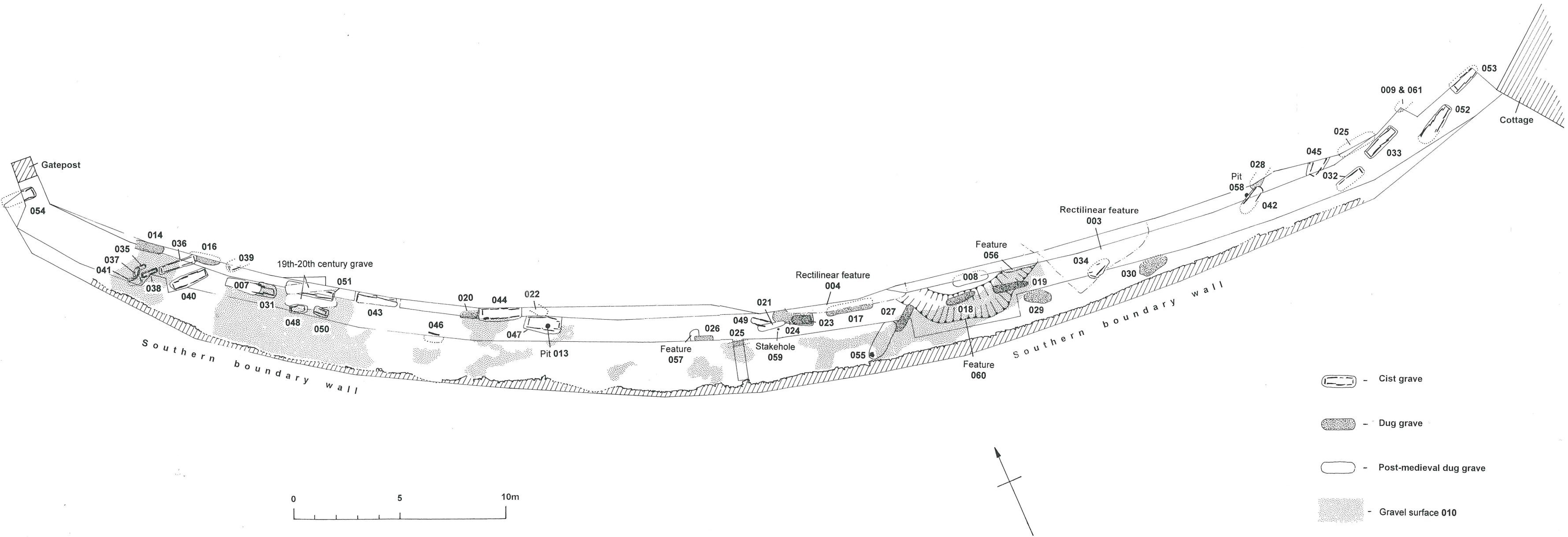


Fig. 3. Composite site plan.

THE POST-MEDIEVAL GRAVES

Three burials, 008, 009 and 021, all dug graves, lay beneath made ground 006. They occupied shallow cuts, no more than 0.5m deep, which were possibly truncated (Fig. 3).

Grave 008 was sealed by made-up ground 006 (see Fig. 9), but was cut through the post-medieval gravel surface 010 (see below). The fill was similar to the clay loam fills of the earlier dug graves, and no bone was apparent in the section. Grave 009, similarly recorded in section, was also sealed by 006 and cut through surface 010 (Fig. 4). The fill appeared to resolve itself into two quite distinct zones, the lower representing an earlier dug grave, 061 on a similar alignment. Both fills were mid-brown clay loams, separated by an area of redeposited subsoil, the lower fill containing some bone fragments. Neither produced any finds. A small, rather narrow grave, 021, measuring 1.3m by 0.25m, was also sealed by 006 but had no relationship with surface 010 (Fig. 3). However, it did cut both an underlying cist grave, 049, and a dug grave, 024, and is possibly post-medieval, though secure dating evidence was absent.

The area around a fourth grave, 007, towards the west end of the excavation, was unfortunately overdug by the contractors and its physical relationship with later deposits was lost (Fig. 3), but it did cut a cist grave, 031. It was oriented WNW-ESE, measured 1.7m by 0.5m and was 0.35m deep. The outline of the burial could be discerned, with one surviving femur. The fill contained three sherds of medieval Dyfed gravel-tempered ware, which were possibly residual.

A pit, 013, also cut gravel surface 010 as well as a cist grave, 047. It was 0.7m in diameter, was regular in outline and may represent a post-pit.

THE POST-MEDIEVAL METALLING (010)

The remainder of the burials was sealed by gravel surface 010, which lay beneath 006, 1m below present churchyard level, and sloped gently downhill from north-east to south-west. It comprised two layers of gravel, consisting of shattered fragments of the local slate in a clay loam matrix, with a maximum thickness of 0.4m (Figs. 4, 5, 8 and 9). The surface was intermittent, but occupied the entire excavated area and appears to have been deliberately laid down over the burials as a surface, possibly representing part of a larger metallated area. The upper layer appears to have been a deliberate resurfacing.

The gravels produced a number of sherds of medieval Dyfed gravel-tempered ware, but also contained a North Devon sherd of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century date. It also sealed a feature, 056, which contained the only other closely datable potsherd, of Ham Green ware from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (Fig. 9). The surface is therefore post-medieval.

THE MEDIEVAL CEMETERY

Lying beneath surface 010 were forty-six densely packed burials (Fig. 3). They were all extended and supine, and of two distinct types — twenty-six were stone lined 'long-cist' graves, while twenty were simple dug graves without stone linings.

Bone preservation was in the main very poor due to soil acidity, and no burials were sufficiently well preserved to reveal age, sex or pathology. Where bone did survive it demonstrated only that, with one exception, the burials were orientated normally with the heads more or less to the west.

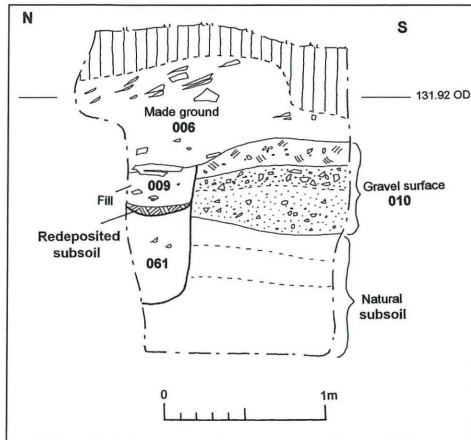


Fig. 4. Section (facing east) of post-medieval grave 009.

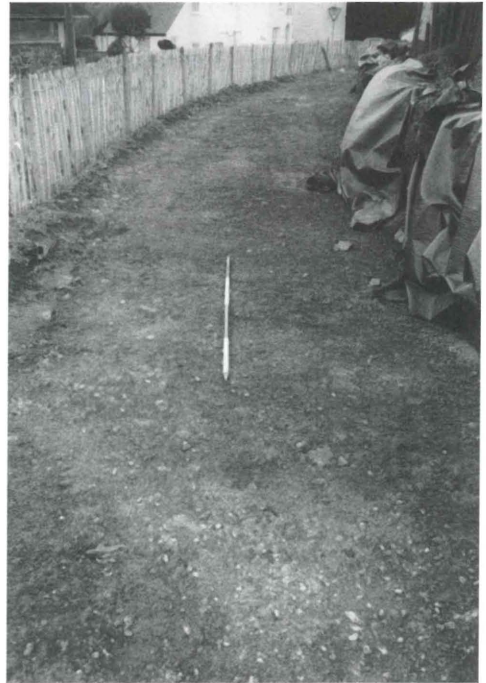


Fig. 5. Gravel surface 010 from the east.

There was little artefactual evidence for burial practice. Both grave types were filled by a yellow-brown clay loam, but the dug grave fills were generally darker and more organic, and indeed dug grave 030 showed a probable coffin stain. In contrast, the cramped posture of the burial within dug grave 017 suggests that a shroud may have been wrapped tightly around the corpse (Fig. 8b). Neither grave, however, had any physical relationship with other contexts and cannot be placed in any sequence. Cist 036 contained a small shale bead, located just above the right humerus, which was probably residual.

With two exceptions, the burials directly cut through the subsoil, and most were directly sealed by post-medieval surface 010, where present. In only three cases – cists 047, 048 and dug grave 014 – were there intervening contexts, but the shallow depth of the grave-cuts, which averaged 0.5m, suggests that further contexts may have been lost through the truncation of the burial horizon prior to the deposition of surface 010.

The graves themselves were generally without dating evidence but the fills of cists 044 and 054, dug grave 021 and feature 057, which was cut by dug grave 026, contained Dyfed gravel-tempered ware. This pottery, all of which was clearly residual, belongs to the late twelfth century at the earliest. The bead in cist 036 cannot be closely dated, but may be prehistoric. Soil samples were taken from all graves, but funding for their analysis has so far been unavailable.

There was some superimposition of burials (see Tables 1 and 2). The dug graves tended to be earlier, four being cut by cist graves while only one dug grave, 025, cut a cist, 033. However, there was a greater degree of superimposition within each burial type.

The alignments of both types altered from east to west, to follow the curving line of the southern churchyard wall, suggesting that it was a persistent boundary (Fig. 3). However

several cist graves, specifically the group 035 - 041 at the west end of the excavation (see Fig. 16), contexts 034 and 054 in the central area, and those at the east end, occupied pronounced SW-NE alignments which were at odds with both the boundary and the majority of the dug graves (Fig. 3). This is perhaps further evidence of a general chronological break between the two types. However, it is not impossible that the two practices were contemporary elsewhere in the churchyard.

The cist graves

Eighteen cist graves were fully excavated, and a further seven were recorded *in situ* (Table 1). Most were of similar construction. All appeared to have both side-slabs and lintel-slabs of local slate, although those of cists 034, 035 and 037 were so disturbed that the slabs could not be properly characterised. Most graves also possessed head- and foot-stones, but only one, 033, had basal slabs (Fig. 7a). Where side- or end-slabs were absent, it was normally due to later disturbance, as in cists 049, 050, 051, and 053, or because of incomplete excavation, as in 045 and 053. However, cists 043 and 044, which both appeared to be undisturbed, lacked foot-stones, while no slabs were present on the south side of the latter. Cist 044 exhibited two layers of lintel-slabs (Fig. 7b). The side- and lintel-slabs, and the basal slabs where present, were roughly cut, averaging 0.5m by 0.3m and 0.035m thick. Head and foot-stones were smaller, averaging 0.3m by 0.2m.

At the west end of the excavation were five small cists, 035, 037, 038, 039 and 041, averaging only 0.3m long by 0.15m wide, located in association with two full-sized cists, 036 and 040. They perhaps represent a family or kinship unit (Figs. 6 and 7c), and their aberrant orientation may be significant. The remainder of the cists was to a large degree consistent in



Fig. 6. Cists 036 and 040 during excavation, 036 still with its lintel stones, from the south-west.

	Excavated	Dimensions (grave cut)	Bone survival	Lintel slabs	Side slabs	End slabs	Base slabs	Cuts	Cut by	Finds
Cist 031	yes	incomplete	none	yes	yes	yes	no	-	post-med grave 007	-
Cist 032	partial	incomplete	none	yes	yes	yes	no	-	-	-
Cist 033	yes	1.8m x 0.7m	partial - skull	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	dug grave 025	-
Cist 034	yes	1.2m x 0.5m	none	possible	possible	possible	no	-	rectilinear feature 003	-
Cist 035	yes	0.6m x 0.4m	none	possible	yes	possible	no	-	cist 0037	-
Cist 036	yes	1.8m x 0.5m	complete	yes	yes	yes	no	dug grave 016	-	shale bead
Cist 037	yes	0.5m x 0.3m	stain only	possible	yes	possible	no	cist 035	-	-
Cist 038	yes	0.8m x 0.25m	teeth only	yes	yes	yes	no	-	-	-
Cist 039	partial	incomplete	none	yes	yes	possible	no	-	-	-
Cist 040	yes	1.9m x 0.65m	partial - skull	yes	yes	yes	no	-	-	-
Cist 041	no	-	-	yes	?	?	no	-	-	-
Cist 042	yes	incomplete	none	yes	yes	possible	no	dug grave 028; pit 058	-	-
Cist 043	yes	2.0m x 0.5m	none	yes	partial	head	no	-	-	-
Cist 044	yes	2.0m x 0.7m	partial - legs	yes	yes	head	no	dug grave 020	-	GTW sherds
Cist 045	partial	incomplete	none	yes	yes	head	no	-	-	-
Cist 046	no	-	-	yes	?	?	no	-	-	-
Cist 047	yes	1.8m x 0.8m	none	yes	yes	yes	no	dug grave 022	pit/post pit 013	-
Cist 048	yes	0.8m x 0.5m	none	yes	yes	yes	no	-	C19 marked grave	-
Cist 049	yes	1.0m x 0.4m	none	yes	yes	possible	no	-	post-med grave 021	-
Cist 050	yes	0.8m x 0.4m	none	yes	yes	foot	no	-	C19 marked grave	-
Cist 051	yes	incomplete	partial - legs	yes	yes	foot	no	-	C19 marked grave	-
Cist 052	yes	incomplete	stain only	yes	yes	foot	no	-	-	-
Cist 053	yes	1.6m x 0.7m	partial - skull	yes	yes	yes	no	-	-	-
Cist 054	partial	incomplete	partial - legs	yes	yes	foot	no	-	-	GTW sherd
Cist 055	no	-	-	yes	?	?	no	dug grave 027	-	-

Table 1. Summary of cist graves.

	Excavated	Dimensions	Bone survival	Coffin stain	Cuts	Cut by	Finds
Dug grave 014	yes	1.3m x 0.4m	complete	no	-	-	-
Dug grave 015	partial	incomplete	partial - skull	no	-	-	-
Dug grave 016	partial	incomplete	partial - legs	no	cist 036	-	-
Dug grave 017	yes	1.7m x 0.4m	complete	no	-	-	-
Dug grave 018	yes	1.5m x 0.4m	stain only	no	ring ditch 060	-	-
Dug grave 019	yes	1.2m x 0.4m	stain only	no	ring ditch 060	-	-
Dug grave 020	partial	incomplete	partial - skull	no	-	cist 033	-
Dug grave 022	no	-	-	no	-	cist 047	-
Dug grave 023	yes	1.05m x 0.4m	complete	no	dug grave 024	-	-
Dug grave 024	yes	1.8m x 0.55m	none	no	-	post-med grave 021; dug grave 023	-
Dug grave 025	partial	incomplete	partial - skull	no	cist 033	-	-
Dug grave 026	yes	incomplete	partial - skull	no	feature 057	-	-
Dug grave 027	partial	incomplete	none	no	ring ditch 060	cist 055	-
Dug grave 028	partial	incomplete	none	no	-	cist 042	-
Dug grave 061	no	-	-	no	-	post-med grave 009	-
Dug grave 029	no	-	-	no	-	-	-
Dug grave 030	no	-	-	yes	-	-	-

Table 2. Summary of dug graves.

terms of size, averaging 1.8m long by 0.5m wide, although three, 048, 049 and 050, were significantly smaller at 0.8m by 0.4m.

Bone preservation was considerably worse than in the dug graves. However, the fills all contained 'bone earth', while 30% displayed bone fragments or deposit. Cist 036 contained substantial skeletal remains (Fig. 7c). The skull was intact but displayed a cranial puncture near the left orbit, possibly caused by tree-root action. The right arm was substantially intact but the left was fragmentary only, the pelvis was very fragmentary while only the two femora survived from the legs, which was however sufficient to demonstrate that the right leg was tucked beneath the left. The bone was very fragile and largely disintegrated upon excavation.

Cist 034 was extensively undercut by the large rectilinear feature 003 and subsequent slumping considerably displaced its slabs (Fig. 3). Cist 049 was cut by post-medieval grave 021, while 051 was both cut and truncated by a nineteenth-century marked grave. Cist 048 meanwhile lay beneath an area of burning, 012, that may represent a hearth (Fig. 3).

The dug graves

Of the twenty dug graves, the eight threatened by the scheme were fully excavated, and another nine were recorded *in situ* (Table 2). About 75% contained bone material, graves 015, 016, 020, 021, 025 and 026 featuring substantial skeletal remains (Fig. 8a). Graves 014, 017 and 023 were occupied by complete skeletons (Fig. 8b and 8c). Grave 017 was only half excavated, sufficient to expose the skull, spine, ribs, pelvis, arm bones crossed over the stomach area, and both femurs (Fig. 8b).

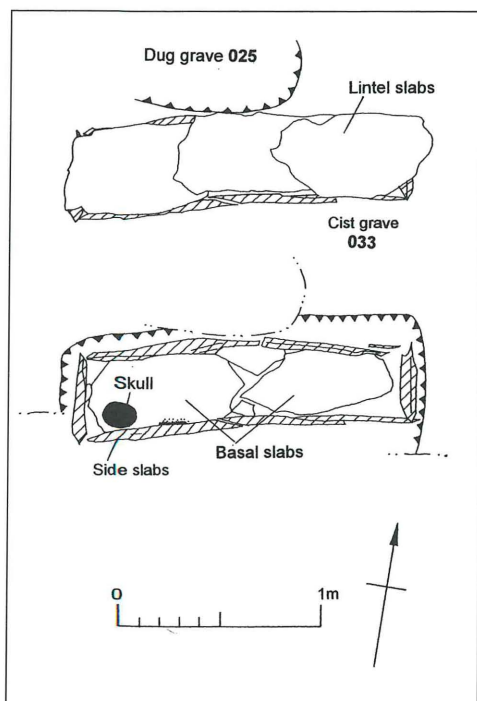


Fig. 7a. Plans of cist grave 033 before and after removal of lintel slabs.

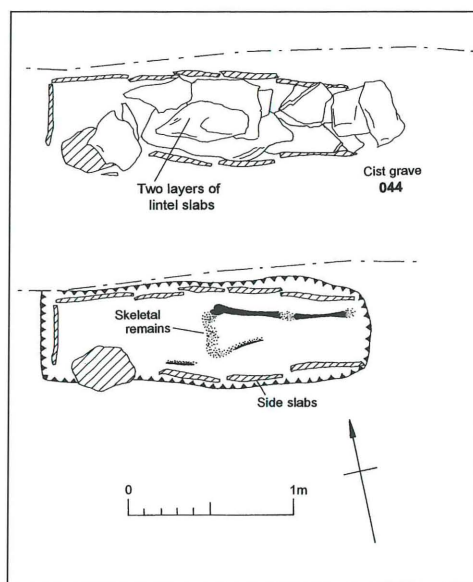


Fig 7b. Plans of cist grave 044 before and after removal of lintel slabs.

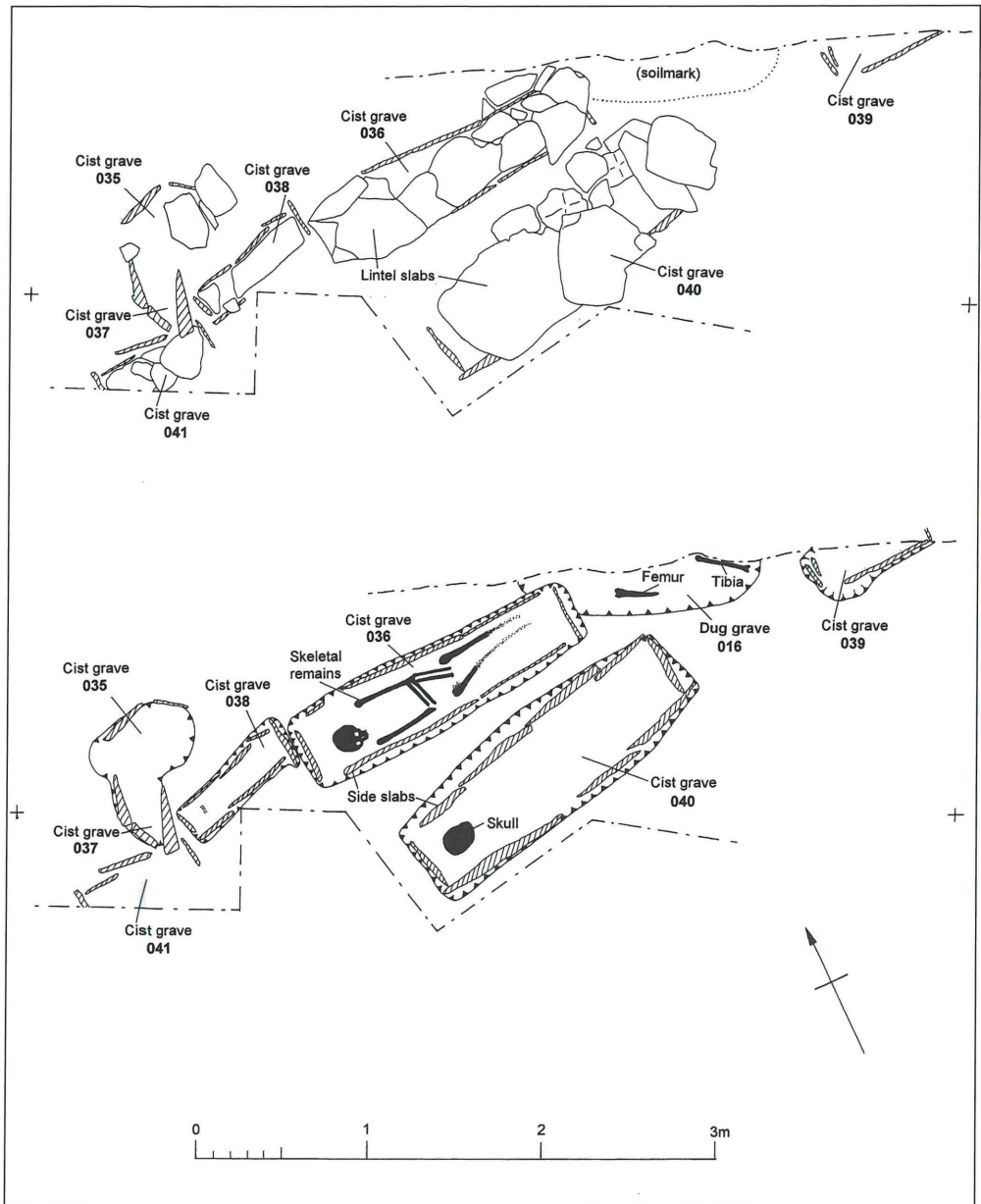


Fig. 7c. Plan of cist group at west end of site before and after excavation, and dug grave 016.

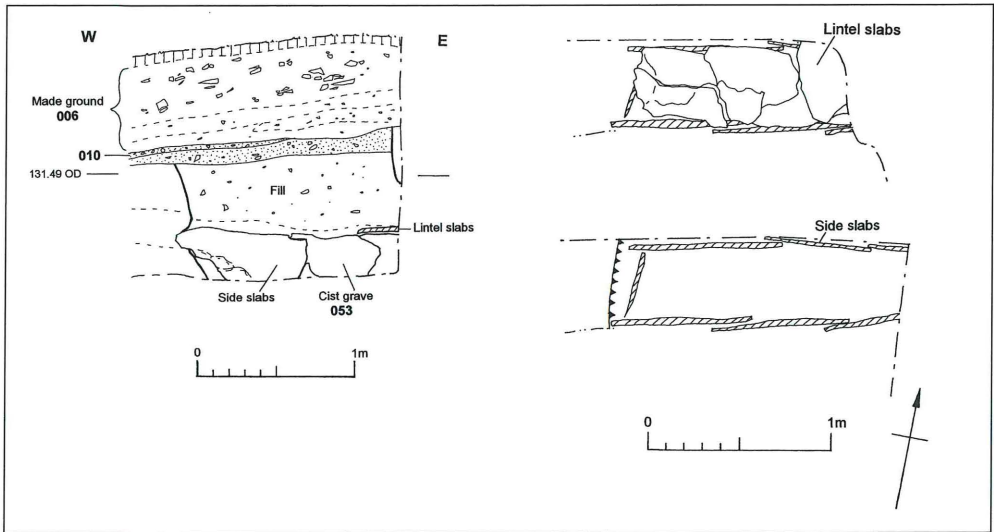


Fig. 7d. Plans and section of cist 053 and overlying deposits, before and after excavation.

Curiously, the burial in grave 014 faced west, with the skull at the east end. The skeleton was complete, but highly fragile, and largely disintegrated upon excavation. It had also been truncated by mechanical excavation, but could be seen to be only 1.3m in length and probably represents a juvenile. Grave 023 was also unusual (Fig. 8c). The spine, ribs, pelvis, femurs, tibiae and fibulae were intact, but the feet had gone and only a stain remained of the arms — enough however to show that they were crossed over the stomach area. There was no evidence

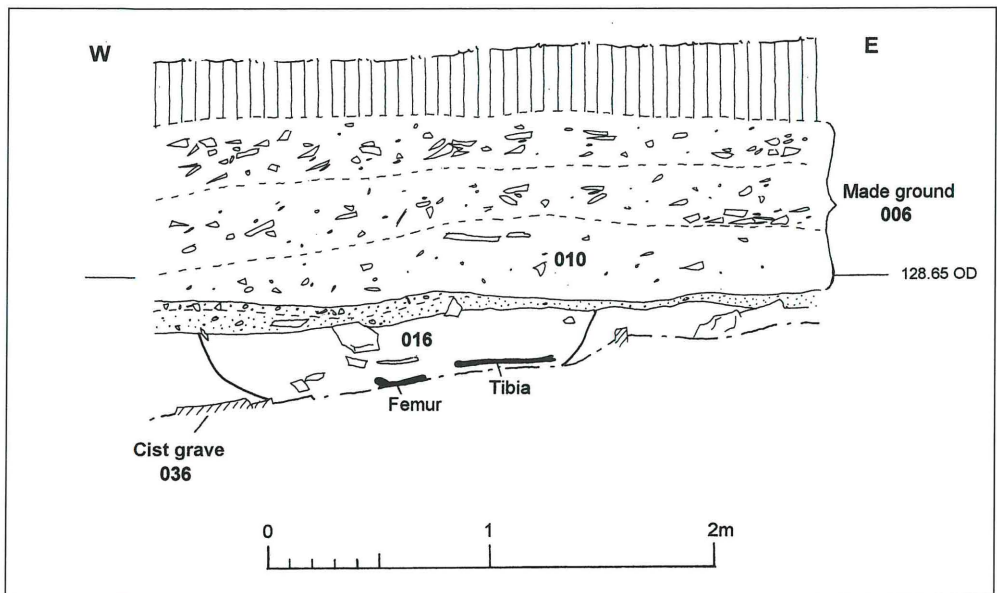


Fig. 8a. Section of dug grave 016 (facing north).

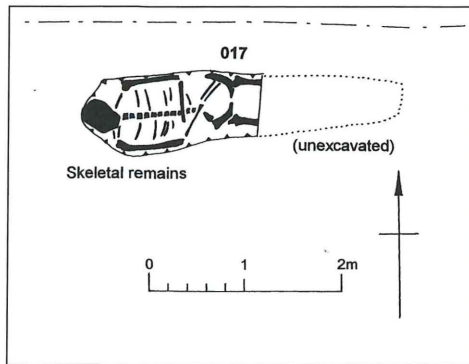


Fig. 8b. Dug grave 017: plan of burial.

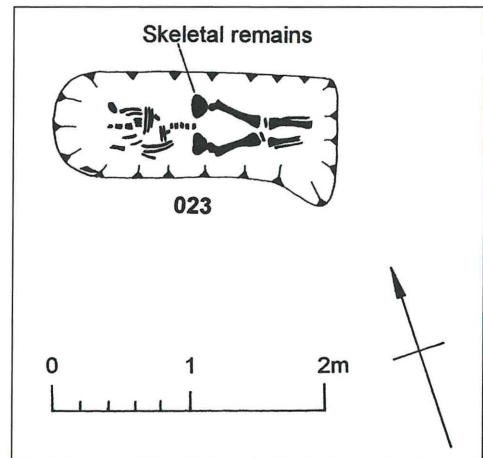


Fig. 8c. Dug grave 023: plan of burial.

of any secondary disturbance, yet the skull was completely absent. From shoulder to heel the skeleton measured only 0.74m but its proportions suggest that the individual had reached maturity.

Grave 014 was sealed by an area of burning, 011, which appeared to represent a deliberate part of the fill. A few dug graves cut earlier, non-burial features.

THE POSSIBLE RING-DITCH (060)

A number of underlying features were cut through the natural soil, of which the most important was a substantial ditch, 060. It formed a regular, curved feature, although its edges were somewhat uneven (Figs. 3, 9 and 10). It averaged 1m in width, being 0.7m deep with a shallow V-shaped profile. At the base was a square-sectioned slot which may have formed by repeated cleaning out of the ditch bottom. This slot contained a grey-brown silty clay loam which, at the western end, was overlain by medium-sized angular slate fragments. Similar fragments lined the sides of the feature. Above these, the feature was filled with a mid-brown clay loam throughout, suggesting that it was deliberately backfilled, presumably after a period of re-excitation and cleaning.

It was not possible to date the ditch. The fill was cut by two medieval dug graves, 018 and 019. It was also cut by feature 056 which contained alternate layers of gravel and silt, with some organic material, and a sherd of late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century Ham Green pottery, possibly residual (Fig. 9). The ditch's only other relationship was with the natural soil. A bronze fitting, of possible Roman date, was recovered from the surface of the fill, but it may, too, be residual. Soil samples were taken from all areas of the fill, but, as with the burials, no funding has so far been available for analysis. Neither can the form of the ditch, in its entirety, be ascertained from the small section revealed, but it may represent the southern arc of a circular feature with an internal diameter of approximately 7m. This dimension would be consistent with its having been the quarry-ditch of a Bronze Age round barrow, as excavated at Plas Gogerddan, Ceredigion, where three such ring-ditches were of similar profile, between 6m and 7.3m in internal diameter, and between 0.3m and 1m in depth (Murphy 1992, 10-13).

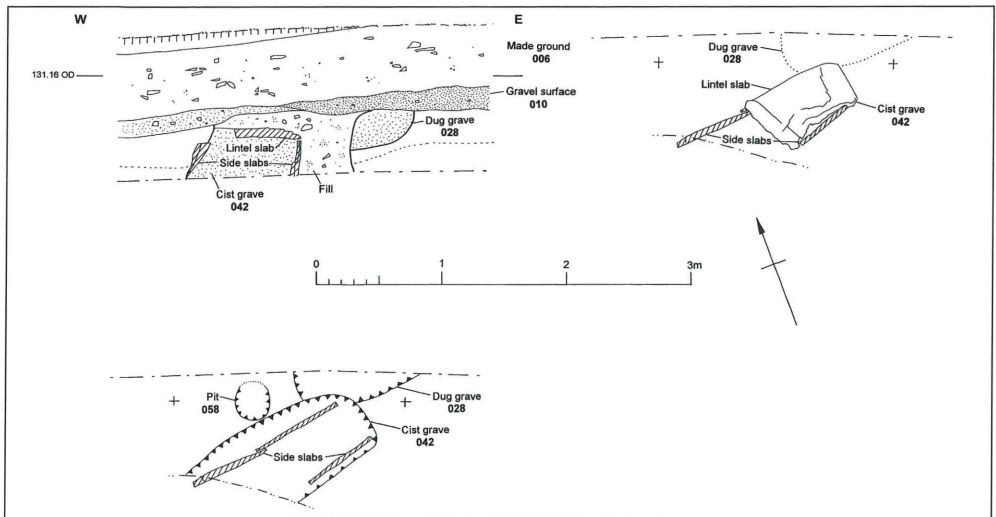


Fig. 8d. Plan and section (facing north) of dug grave 028, cist grave 042, and overlying deposits.

A number of other features cut the natural soil, but in the main they were small and not fully characterised (Fig. 3). They include at least one pit, 058, and a stakehole, 059. An elliptical feature of uncertain form, 057, contained several sherds of medieval Dyfed gravel-tempered ware and was cut by dug grave 026.

THE FINDS

POTTERY AND TILE *by Dee Brennan*

A total of ninety-three sherds of medieval pottery, and two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the excavation. The medieval material consists almost totally of local pottery. This comprises hand-made jars and jugs in fabrics identified as Dyfed gravel-tempered ware. The fabric was first identified by C. O'Mahoney (1985) and a recent survey of medieval ceramics in Wales gives a brief summary of the fabrics, forms, dating and distribution of this ware (Papazian & Campbell 1992, 56-59). The majority of the sherds – seventy in total – were recovered from the gravel surface 010 that sealed the medieval burials, but four sherds were recovered from the fills of cist graves 044 and 054. There was evidence for only one non-local vessel, a sherd of a late twelfth- to early thirteenth-century jug from the Ham Green area of Bristol (fill of feature 056).

There is no chronological type series yet available for locally made wares. They were certainly produced during the thirteenth century but, as with the Cardigan Castle and Newport assemblages, the associated Ham Green pottery provides the only means of dating. At both sites local gravel-tempered vessels were found with late twelfth- to early thirteenth-century Ham Green cooking pots and glazed jugs (O'Mahoney, in Murphy 1985, 205; Brennan & Murphy 1996, 1). The terminal date is thought to be sometime during the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century when North Devon wares arrived on the Welsh market (Papazian & Campbell 1992, 56).

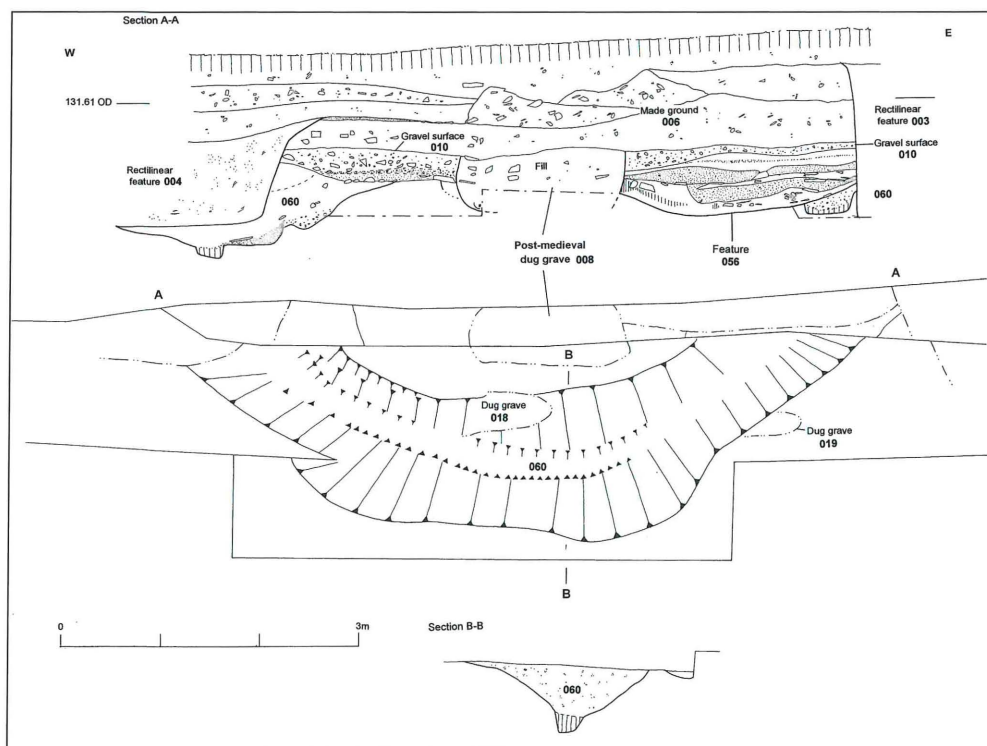


Fig. 9. Plan and sections of ring-ditch 060.

The local content of this small assemblage reflects previously published ceramic collections within the region including Gwbert (Benson *et al.* 1978), Cardigan Castle (O'Mahoney, in Murphy 1985), Newport (Brennan & Murphy 1996) and a number of other west Wales sites (publications forthcoming). As with these sites, unglazed cooking pots (77 sherds) are the dominant form in the Eglwysrwrw assemblage, glazed vessels (14 sherds), probably jugs, forming a low proportion of the total sherd count.

The post-medieval pottery is of seventeenth - to eighteenth-century date and consists of two sherds from glazed vessels in the distinctive North Devon gravel-tempered fabric. Both are from recognisably post-medieval features.

Ten fragments of glazed ridge tile were found. All are in a fabric similar to the local wares found on site and are probably of similar date. One noticeably thicker fragment with glaze surviving on its upper surface is probably floor tile.

PLASTER, IRON, GLASS, CLAY AND STONE by Dee Brennan and Neil Ludlow

The vast majority of finds recovered from the site were ceramic. However, a few contexts contained finds of other material but none provide much further insight into dating or use of the site. Wall plaster with an ochre wash finish was recovered from the fill of feature 003 and, although not closely datable, may be medieval. Only one coffin nail was recovered, again from feature 003 where it may be residual, but a larger iron object from gravel surface 010 may be a

clog-iron, of uncertain date. The fill of 003 also contained the shards of an eighteenth-century bottle, while the fill of feature 004 contained the only clay-pipe stem recovered from the excavation, which was of seventeenth - to nineteenth-century date.

The shale bead from the fill of cist grave 036 was approximately 6mm in diameter and was perforated for mounting on a string; its occurrence singly within the burial may be accidental rather than the result of deliberate deposition. It cannot be closely dated but is probably residual, and may be prehistoric.

BRONZE by *Janet Webster*

An incomplete bronze object was recovered from the interface between the fill of ?ring-ditch 060 and gravel surface 010. It may be of Roman date. The object comprises a short, stout cylindrical bronze bar, 53mm long, with a diameter of 9mm, decorated with transverse mouldings and terminating at each end in what appear now as ?iron knobs (Fig. 11). Although the mouldings are carried all the way round the piece, one half of the bar has less pronounced mouldings, is apparently more severely worn and has lost its surface patina, suggesting both that it took more wear than the 'front' half and, perhaps, that it was not meant to be so much seen.

The decoration on the bar is of astralagus form with a pair of mouldings separated by a groove forming the 'reel' at the centre, flanked by a 'bead' to either side and terminating in a further narrow moulding at the end of each bead. Beyond the narrow mouldings the bar narrows, then widens slightly to its junction with the ?iron knob at each end.

Insufficient remains of the piece to be able to identify its function or its date. From the Roman period a number of items which have some similarity can be cited but they cannot be claimed as parallels for the piece. A knife handle from Verulamium (St Albans), for example, has a separately made, moulded bar, originally one of a pair, inserted within its openwork frame and secured in holes in the frame by projections from either end of the bar (Frere 1972, 124 no.75). The Verulamium piece is much smaller than the Eglwysrwr bar but a similar decorative or spacing function may, perhaps, have pertained to the latter. The piece might have served as a pivot. A somewhat unusual, rectangular, iron buckle from Saalburg has a pivoted frame, with a pivot somewhat resembling the Eglwysrwr bar. In the Saalburg buckle the tongue is attached to the frame proper and it is difficult to envisage how the piece functioned (Oldenstein 1976, 216, no. 1040, Taf. 78).

Handles of various forms in the Roman period carry similar decoration to that of the bar under discussion. A larger, cruder, cylindrical bar, with a cleft end, from South Shields, is thought to have served as a mirror handle (Allason-Jones and Miket 1984, 166, 3.429). A more elegant mirror handle from Nijmegen (Lloyd-Morgan 1981, 55, no.1) has simplified astralagus mouldings. A series of handles terminating each in the form of a human hand, from the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, have similar mouldings to the Eglwysrwr piece, along the 'arm' (Menzel 1986, 119, nos. 286-8, Taf. 121). However, the overall form of the Eglwysrwr piece is clearly different from these. Though it might seem that its obvious function was either as a vessel handle, cf. Eggers 1951, Taf. 10 nos. 98, 99, 100-103, or as a drop-handle, cf. examples from the Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn (eg. Menzel 1986, 183-7, nos. 503-517, Taf. 152-4), the piece lacks the accepted means of attachment. It has been suggested that it may represent a clothes-fastening, similar to a present-day toggle (Donald Moore, pers. comm.).

In conclusion, the piece cannot be dated accurately and its function cannot be defined. Similar bronze bars with similar decoration to the Eglwysrwr piece were certainly in use during the



Fig. 10. Ring-ditch 060 from the east.

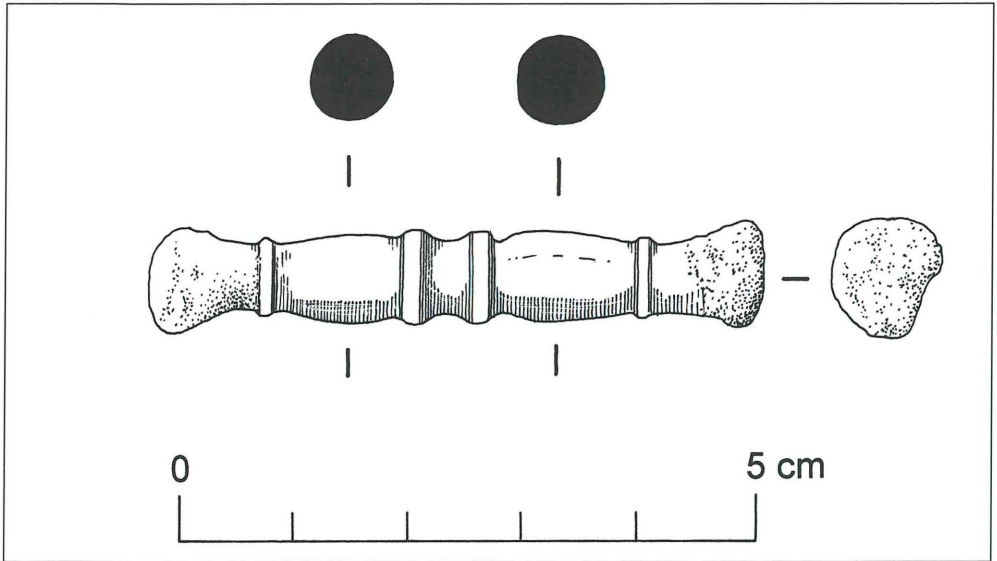


Fig. 11. The bronze object from the surface of feature 060.



Fig. 12. Distribution of cist cemetery sites in West Wales (from James 1987).

Roman period. Its location within a context that was well sealed by a medieval deposit would suggest that the piece cannot be post-medieval, but without being able to identify its function it is impossible to determine whether the object is of Roman manufacture and use; however, it is unlikely to be a post-medieval Classical revival piece.

DISCUSSION

THE EGLWYSWRW BURIALS

The datable burials, half of which are in an early medieval 'long-cist' tradition, all belong to the post-Conquest period, and possibly fairly late within it. The fills of cists 044 and 054, and of feature 057 – which was cut by dug grave 026 – contained Dyfed gravel-tempered ware which dates from the late twelfth century at the earliest, and is possibly as late as the late sixteenth century. The burials were largely sealed by gravel surface 010 which produced a large assemblage of similar ware, but also contained a North Devon sherd of sixteenth - to eighteenth-century date. Surface 010 was in turn sealed by nineteenth-century made ground 006 which, within the excavated area, lay directly upon gravel surface 010. This suggests either that the surface remained exposed until the nineteenth century, or that intervening contexts have been removed. The former seems most likely as no truncation appears to have occurred in the two post-medieval burials, 008 and 009. Intervening contexts may however lie elsewhere within the yard.

The evidence suggests that the burials were established within a relatively short time-span and, in the excavated area, shortly after burial first commenced at the site. However, the dug graves within the excavated area were mainly earlier than the cists and, unlike the cists, appear to have been influenced by a pre-existing feature on the line of the present southern boundary.

The significance of the differing burial practices cannot be conclusively determined. The dug graves were all rather similar but the cist graves formed a disparate group with few consistent forms. Some, such as the western group, cists 035-041, were at least broadly similar and appear to be more or less contemporary. However, the isolated cists without side- or end-slabs, with two layers of lintel-slabs or the single basal-slabbed cist defy any developmental analysis and, in any case, their broad contemporaneity has been noted above. Dug grave 014 with its reversed inhumation and overlying burnt material is without known local parallels and may have been occasioned by individual circumstances.

LONG-CIST CEMETERIES IN WALES

All Christian cist burials are properly termed 'long cists' to distinguish them from the smaller, stone-lined burials that occur in pre-Christian contexts. The terminology normally used was established by Charles Thomas (Thomas 1971, 49), in which a simple body-length hollow is termed a 'dug grave'; burials with stone linings, or with slabs at the base or head are termed 'cist graves', and those slabbed at base, head, foot and with covering slabs are termed 'lintel graves'. However, the degree of stone-lining at Eglwyswrw was variable. Our incomplete understanding of the development of long-cist cemeteries, the relationship between cist graves and dug graves and their relative dating have been discussed by, *inter alios*, Preston-Jones (1984) and Alcock (1992).

Eglwyswrw lies within one of the densest concentrations of long-cist cemeteries in west Wales (James 1987, 65; Fig. 12), where they have mainly been the subject of chance observations. Although there is usually little indication of their date, they have traditionally

been regarded as pre-Conquest. There appear, for example, to be marked concentrations along the north Pembrokeshire coast and around the west end of Milford Haven (Fig. 27) in a pattern similar to that of Latin-inscribed Early Christian Monuments, which has been taken to indicate late Roman or post-Roman Irish settlement. However, all the burials at Eglwysrwr appear to be post-Conquest, as indeed may be the church foundation itself, although it is possible that earlier burials lie undiscovered elsewhere within the churchyard.

Some excavated long-cist cemeteries have, in England, produced almost exclusively post-Conquest dates, for instance the eleventh- to sixteenth-century cemetery at Winchester Cathedral (Kjølbye-Biddle 1975, 87-108). The tradition was remarkably persistent in Scotland, too, represented by thirteenth- to fourteenth-century cists at Jedburgh Abbey (Youngs *et al.* 1985, 220-221), and possibly at Iona (Reece 1981, 104), while similar post-Conquest dates have been suggested in Cornwall (Preston-Jones 1984, 157-177).

No post-Conquest cist cemeteries have hitherto been conclusively identified in Wales. However, of the 33 cist cemeteries that have been recorded in west Wales, only five have produced any form of dating evidence. Three of these dates are pre-Conquest. These have been discussed in full in James (1987), along with a catalogue of all cemetery sites then identified in west Wales. A cist cutting the defensive bank at Caer, Bayvil, a cemetery site 4.5km north-west of Eglwysrwr, produced an uncalibrated radiocarbon date of AD 605-725 (James 1987, 72; Fig. 12, no. 18). This appears to have been an 'undeveloped' site, i.e. it never received a structural church or chapel. A date of cal. AD 880-1020 (sigma range unknown) was obtained from a cist at St Brides cemetery, exposed by marine erosion (James 1987, 72 no. 34), which may have occupied a large enclosure containing both the parish church and a medieval chapel or *capel-y-bedd* (see below). Finally, a cist from the churchyard of Llanychlywydog parish church, in association with five Early Christian monuments, produced a date of cal. AD 853-1004 at 1 sigma range (Murphy 1987, 88 n.24; Fig. 12, no. 17).

Further afield, at the early medieval monastic cemetery at Llandough, Glamorgan, a total of 858 inhumations were recorded in 1994 (Thomas and Holbrook 1994, 66-8) – the largest early medieval cemetery excavated in Wales to date. The majority of burials were dug graves, a few of them displaying evidence of coffin stains. A small number contained lining stones but no lintel cists were represented. Four radiocarbon dates give dates ranging from the fifth to the eleventh century, and the absence of medieval pottery from the grave suggests that burial had ceased by the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Excavations at Barry, Glamorgan, revealed good evidence for the continuity and co-existence of early burial practices (Newman 1985, 37-8; Newman and Parkin 1986, 55; Price 1987, 60-61). The 45 burials exhibited a variety of forms ranging from dug graves, with both shrouds and timber covers, to cist burials. Moreover, these forms are present both early and late in the burial sequence, which ranged from the fourth to the sixth centuries, 'with potential for extension to the second-tenth centuries' (H. James 1992, 96).

The evidence from Eglwysrwr conclusively demonstrates the continuity of early medieval burial traditions in Wales, at least in north Pembrokeshire, which was among the most persistently 'Welsh' regions of west Wales in the post-Conquest period. There may be local parallels. A cist grave at Cilgerran churchyard, Pembrokeshire, which was opened in the mid nineteenth century, apparently contained thirteenth-century coins (Anon. 1859, 350). Furthermore, the re-use of a cross-incised Early Christian Monument as a lintel-slab over an undated cist at St Patrick's Chapel, St David's (James 1987, 70; Fig. 12, no. 3), suggests a later rather than earlier date. In Carmarthenshire, the cist burials observed at Llanllwni, in 1877, were seemingly cut into the flank of a motte lying immediately east of the church (James 1987,

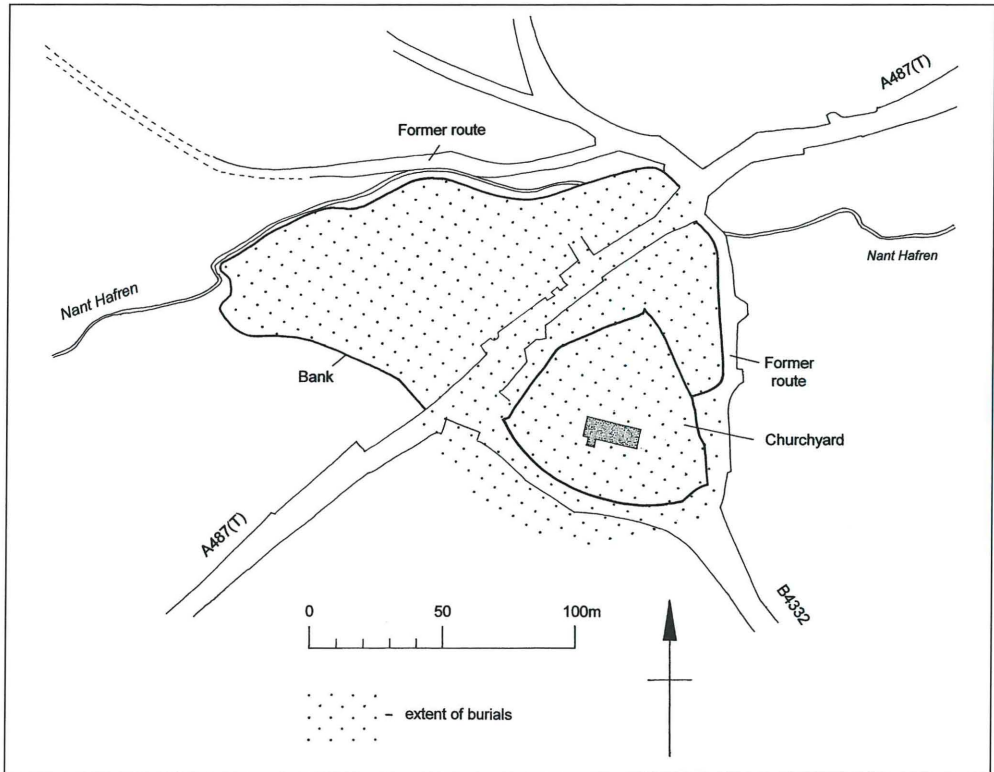


Fig. 13. The extent of cist burial as described in 1875.

73; Fig. 12, no. 23), while several burials at the Tironian priory at Pill, near Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire, founded in the late twelfth century, contained a layer of broken slate lying – in the ‘cist-grave’ tradition – just above the inhumation (Ludlow 2002).

Moreover the presence of ‘headstones’ at the cemetery site on Ramsey Island, one of them a re-used eighth- or ninth- century inscribed stone (Fig. 12, no. 1), may be in the continuing post-medieval cist tradition alluded to by, *inter alios*, Charles Thomas (Thomas 1971; Heather James, pers. comm.). Elsewhere in Britain ‘cist’ burials of convincingly medieval appearance have been found in association with memorials of seventeenth to eighteenth century date (*ibid.*). Welsh settlers, moreover, are recorded as establishing cemeteries in the USA in which the coffins were covered with a layer of stone slabs, said to represent the ‘traditional Welsh style’ (Sarah Tarlow, University of Leicester, pers. comm.).

The above discussions demonstrate the current gap in knowledge regarding the continuity of, or preference for, certain burial practices. Continuity within a given region will have its own cultural significance, but if a number of practices were contemporary, what does this tell us about the individuals interred and the factors influencing their choice of a dug, lined, cist or lintel grave? Was it merely status?

Many cemetery sites in Pembrokeshire, dated or otherwise, were established over earlier sites (discussed in full by James 1992). The undeveloped cemetery at Caer, Bayvil, was established



Fig. 14. The church of St Cristiolus, Eglwysrwr, from the south-east, after road-widening.

within a small Iron Age defended enclosure (James 1987). Of significance for the Eglwysrwr site are those cemeteries that appear to have been established around pre-existing burial or ritual sites that were ‘prominent enough to effectively invite re-use’ (H. James 1992, 93). Excavations at Plas Gogerddan in Cardiganshire revealed an undeveloped cemetery including 22 dug graves, nine of which displayed coffin stains (Murphy 1987). No cist burials were present, but one of the graves yielded a radiocarbon date of the third to the seventh century AD. The cemetery was associated with a standing stone and three late Bronze Age barrow ring-ditches, the fill of one containing a crouched burial of Iron Age or early Romano-British date. The cemetery at Tandderwen, Denbighshire, where all 39 graves were dug graves, was associated with a similar ring-ditch (Brassil *et al.* 1991); a radiocarbon date of cal. AD 433-680 was obtained from one of the graves. These examples are early, and remained undeveloped, unlike the late and developed site at Eglwysrwr, but many more undated examples of the re-use of Bronze Age sites have been identified (Edwards 1986, 19-41; James 1987, 70-75). However, it may be significant that ?ring-ditch 060 at Eglwysrwr appears to have been deliberately backfilled, while other excavated examples appear to have silted over in the course of time.

CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

It is assumed that medieval cemetery occupied the entire area of the present churchyard, but its original extent was not established. The evidence suggests that the south-west slope downhill from the church may have been formerly more pronounced than at present and appears to have been reduced by later road construction. Meanwhile, the steep slope along the southern boundary suggests that the present B4332 may occupy a natural valley, possibly enhanced as a medieval ‘hollow way’.

The churchyard at Eglwysrwr had assumed its present form by 1838 (NLW, Eglwysrwr Tithe Map), when routeways had been established on the lines of the A487(T) and B4332. The former route must have been in existence by the mid eighteenth century, when the Armoury and Serjeants' Inn were built, but is said to have superseded a routeway that ran along the course of the Nant Hafren, to the northwest. It is a firmly held local belief that the medieval cemetery extended up to this suggested early routeway, 'many graves (having) been uncovered from time to time along the roads through the village' (Anon. 1875). In addition, cist graves have been encountered immediately south-west of the churchyard, beneath the B4332 and therefore beyond the persistent southern churchyard boundary. These graves appear largely to correspond with a large, sub-triangular enclosure, defined by the churchyard, substantial banks to the north-west, and an early routeway (Fig. 13). Early, larger burial enclosures have been suggested at St Brides, noted above, at St Ishmaels, Pembrokeshire (Fig. 12, no. 33) and possibly at nearby Bridell (Fig. 12, no. 19), where undated cist burials were apparently observed 'near the church' in 1860 and 1885 (James 1987, 73). However, there are no known local parallels for the irregular form of the possible Eglwysrwr enclosure. Where evidence for outer enclosures has been observed around churchyards on aerial photographs, they are normally curvilinear and some are thought to represent the re-use of Iron Age 'concentric' enclosures (cf. the undeveloped Caer, Bayvil - see above). Such enclosure complexes have been noted at Llangan and Llandeilo Llwydardh, Pembrokeshire, and at Llanwinio in Carmarthenshire - the latter two in association with Latin-inscribed Early Christian monuments (T. James 1992, 69-72). There is no suggestion, either in shape or siting, that the putative outer enclosure at Eglwysrwr is a re-used Iron Age feature. It may, like the cist burials, also be post-Conquest.

Within the present churchyard, rectilinear feature 003 is suggestive of the nineteenth-century robbing of a masonry structure, and it was sufficiently oriented to suggest that an ecclesiastical structure may be represented. The feature was not totally excavated but a rectangular plan and a deep below-ground component were indicated. It must have been removed after 1829, which is the earliest realistic date for the deposition of debris 006, but there is no documentary record, nor Faculty, for the work. The feature is too far south to represent the former south transept, but it may represent the removal of the truncated remains of 'St Erow's Chapel', described in the late sixteenth century and possibly still visible in 1875 (Anon. 1875). It lies significantly close to ?ring-ditch 060, which may have been the primary burial focus. The robbing cuts cist grave 034, which occupies the same alignment (Fig. 3), but there appears to have been no direct relationship between the two, while the exact function of the chapel remains a mystery. It cannot, on current evidence, be proved to have been a *capel-y-bedd* (founder's grave chapel), but a *capel-y-bedd* has been recorded in the nearby churchyard at Clydai (RCAHMW 1925, 75), while the former chapel at St Brides (see above), and the chapel built against the nave south wall at Rhoscrowdder, Pembrokeshire, may have been similar structures.

CONCLUSION

The artefactual evidence demonstrates that the cemetery at Eglwysrwr was established after the late twelfth century, possibly at the same time as the church itself. The forty-six burials were divided almost equally between cist graves and simple dug graves. Though both types were broadly contemporary, it appears that the dug graves were generally earlier and tended to occupy a different alignment from the cists. However, the evidence suggests that both types were established within a relatively short time-span, possibly soon after burial first commenced

at the site. The cemetery may have been established over a Bronze Age round barrow, represented by part of a possible ring-ditch. The extent of the medieval churchyard was not determined, but a boundary of some nature appears to have occupied the same line as the present southern boundary. Nevertheless, the churchyard may have been part of a larger cemetery complex enclosed within a bank. An extensive spread of material was laid down over the southern edge of the yard in the nineteenth century. This is cut by a substantial rectilinear feature that may relate to the removal of the foundations of the churchyard chapel recorded in the sixteenth century.

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