

# EXCAVATION AT ST PATRICK'S CHAPEL 2014 INTERIM REPORT



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust

For Cadw and Pembrokeshire Coast  
National Park Authority



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# EXCAVATION AT ST PATRICK'S CHAPEL 2014 INTERIM REPORT

By

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## **EXCAVATION AT ST PATRICK'S CHAPEL 2014: INTERIM REPORT**

### **SUMMARY**

*St Patrick's Chapel lies in sand dunes immediately above the high tide level at Whitesands Beach in the parish of St Davids, Pembrokeshire. There is only one known historic reference to the site, and this, in about 1600, was when the Chapel was in ruins. In 1924, excavations uncovered the foundations of a small, stone-built chapel, internally approximately 9m E-W and 3.3m N-S, and several well-preserved burials.*

*Coastal erosion has been affecting the site since at least 1924, and there is anecdotal evidence of burials being exposed in the eroding face of the sand dunes in the decades following the excavation. In 1970, concerns about erosion prompted a small-scale excavation, during which five skeletons were recovered, some of which were in long cist graves.*

*Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority acquired the site in the 1970s and initiated a programme of stabilisation, culminating in about 2004 with protecting the eroding face of the sand dunes with large boulders. These were washed away by the sea during the severe storms of the winter of 2013-14, immediately replaced, but only to be washed away again by more storms. Several long cist graves with well preserved were revealed by the storms; these were recorded in February 2014. In May 2014, a two-week excavation was undertaken, concentrating on the area most affected by coastal erosion.*

*Four trenches were excavated in May 2014. Trench 1 investigated a c.2m wide strip along the eroding face of the sand dunes, revealing deeply stratified and complex archaeological deposits. The bottom of the wind-blown sand was not reached, but low down within the dunes a soil formation indicated a period of stabilisation. Above this wind-blown sand had accumulated onto which a stone wall of massive beach boulders had been built. This wall seems to have been the west end/side of a building or structure. No dating evidence for it was found. Some graves were dug alongside the wall and may have been contemporaneous with it, but most post-dated the wall and were dug when the wall had decayed. Some graves were long cists – generally with side slabs and lintel slabs, but no base slabs – others were simple dug graves. At least 23 graves were present, but large quantities of loose bone scattered throughout the wind-blown sand indicates many more have been disturbed. A long sequence of burial was present, with in one instance three and possibly four burials stacked on top of each other. One of the long cist graves, containing a skeleton of a young female, had a stone cross upright at the west end. A similar cross was found on the beach immediately below the trench, having, almost certainly, eroded from one of the other graves during the winter storms.*

*The walls of the Chapel identified in the 1924 excavation were investigated in the other three trenches. The walls survived in good condition up to 1m high. To the north and south of the Chapel dry-stone walls may have been the boundary of the chapel-yard. The boundary wall to the north was associated with a surface made from rounded quartz stones. It was not possible to establish a stratigraphic relationship between the Chapel and the graves excavated in Trench 1, but a comparison of relative heights suggests that most, if not all, the graves pre-date the Chapel.*

*Currently little dating evidence is available. Long cist graves are characteristic of the early medieval period in Wales, and there is no reason to suspect that those from St Patrick's are of any other date. The Chapel excavated in 1924 is later, probably of the*

*high medieval period (13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century). The date and function of the building or structure pre-dating most of the burials is unknown.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The site of St Patrick's Chapel occupies a narrow strip of rough ground immediately to the north of Whitesands Beach car park in the parish of St Davids, Pembrokeshire (National Grid Reference SM7337027230). Coastal erosion is active on the western side of the site: the Pembrokeshire Coast Path runs to the east of the site (Fig. 1, Photos 1-4). A low sand dune up to 3.5m high and approximately 20m diameter marks the site of the chapel.

The only historical reference to the Chapel is by George Owen, writing in about 1600, after it had gone out of use (quoted by Badger and Green 1925):

**'Not far off (from Capel Stinan) is Capel Patrick full west of St Davids and placed as near his country, namely Ireland, as it could well be. It is now wholly decayed' and in a description of Whitesands Bay (Porth Mawr) 'the next noted place upon the coast is Porth-mawr ... This bay is near Capel Patrick'.**

Excavation in 1924 revealed the walls of a stone-built chapel, internally approximately 9m E-W and 3.3m N-S (Badger and Green 1925). Several well-preserved burials were found inside the chapel. No excavation took place outside the chapel walls. Although no dating evidence was recovered in 1924, the date of the stone-built chapel is probably later medieval. Photograph 25 is a reproduction of the plan of the Chapel from the 1925 publication.

It is not certain when erosion started to affect the site, but it was active at the time of the 1924 excavation, and a comparison of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1888 with modern maps indicates a loss of 25m of land over 125 years. There is anecdotal evidence of burials being exposed for several decades and by 1970 erosion was so severe – exacerbated by the coast path then running along the seaward edge of the sand dunes – that Douglas Hague of the RCAHMS undertook a small-scale excavation recovering five skeletons, some of which were in long cist graves. One of the lintel boulders of a cist had a cross roughly scratched into on face (see Photos 26-30). At about the same time burials were also noted eroding out of the top of low cliffs c. 125m to the north of the Chapel (pers. comm. J Wyn Evans). There is now no trace of burials in this location.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) acquired the site during the 1970s, moved the coast path from the seaward side of the Chapel to the landward side and restored the damage caused by visitor erosion. Due to continuing coastal erosion, in about 2004, the Park Authority protected the eroding face of the sand dunes with boulders. These boulders did their job until they were washed away during the severe storms of the winter of 2013-14. They were replaced, and immediately washed away by more storms. At that point the Park Authority decided not to protect the site from coastal erosion.

Following the winter storms, members of the public reported finding human bone sticking out of the sand dunes or loose on the beach below. Dyfed Archaeological Trust applied to Cadw for contingency grant aid to record the exposed burials and to recover exposed bone. The Trust in conjunction with the PCNPA Archaeologist carried out this work in February 2014. In May 2014, the Trust, again grant-aided by Cadw, in partnership with

the PCNPA and with local volunteers, undertook the two-week excavation described in this short report.

## **GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY**

A magnetometry survey was undertaken in late April 2014 over the site of the Chapel and in the small field immediately to the east of the Chapel, with the aim of detecting a boundary to the Chapel and cemetery and any other associated features. The results were disappointing, and apart from the walls of the Chapel excavated in 1924, nothing of significance was detected.

## **THE 2014 EXCAVATIONS**

The excavations took place between 12<sup>th</sup> May and 23<sup>rd</sup> May. The weather was warm and sunny apart from the last two days, which were wet. All of the excavation was in wind-blown sand.

Four trenches were hand excavated (Fig. 2):

Trench 1 was a c. 2m wide 18m long strip along the eroding edge of the sand dunes designed to excavate all the eroding graves and associated features.

Trench 2 investigated the west wall of the Chapel excavated in 1924 and linked up to Trench 1.

Trench 3 ran to the north of the north wall of the Chapel excavated in 1924 with the aim of defining the northern limit of burials.

Trench 4 ran to the south of the south wall of the Chapel excavated in 1924 with the aim of defining the southern limit of burials.

The site was deeply stratified, and a provisional sequence is as follows, although this will undoubtedly be modified as more work is done:

1. Pre wind-blown ground surface. This was not encountered in the excavation but is estimated to be at least a metre below the bottom of Trench 1. Evidence from excavations on other sites in sand dunes in south-west Wales indicates that this ground surface is likely to be prehistoric.
2. Initial accumulation of wind-blown sand, probably a little over 1m thick.
3. The wind-blown sand stabilises and a soil forms (Trench 1, 45). Charcoal-rich deposits on the surface of the soil are suggestive of human activity.
4. Wind-blown sand accumulates over the soil formation (45) to a depth of c. 0.3m.
5. A substantial wall (42) composed of beach boulders (some massive) is built on the wind-blown sand. It is unclear whether this wall is part of a building or some other structure. It is possible that some burials are contemporaneous with this wall, or with 6 and 7 below.
6. Wind-blown sand accumulates around the base of the wall (42).
7. The wall (42) begins to dilapidate.
8. Long cist graves are dug through and on top of the dilapidating wall, some reusing wall stones in the cists.



9. Sand continues to accumulate.

10. A stone-built chapel (excavated 1924) is constructed. Most graves are probably earlier than the chapel, but some may be contemporary.

11. The chapel decays and wind-blown sand accumulates in and around it.

12. Coastal erosion affects the site, the chapel is excavated in 1924, graves are excavated in 1970 and later stabilisation schemes take place.

The wind-blown sand into which the graves had been dug and on which the walls had been constructed was highly disturbed, especially along the eroding seaward edge where recent erosion and attempts to stabilise the sand have been most active. Fragments of human bone were found at all levels above the soil formation 45, and modern artefacts such as bottles and ice cream wrappers occurred in what seemed to be undisturbed deposits, sometimes below graves. Some of this mixing of deposits occurred in the medieval period as graves were dug through earlier graves, but rabbits, people burrowing into the exposed face of the sand dunes to extract bone, picnickers burying bottles and other debris and attempts to stabilise the sand dunes with fences, by placing a car in an eroding hollow (Photo. 5) and by depositing soil and rubble have all contributed to mixing and disturbing the sand and archaeological deposits.

In most instances grave cuts were not visible in the sand and the only way to ensure all the skeletons had been found was to remove the sand in spits. In some cases soil discolouration was noted immediately above the skeleton, and in a couple of examples grave cuts were visible, more obvious in section than in plan. The cist graves were obviously more easily detected than the simple dug graves, but again grave cuts were not generally seen, and thus the depth from which graves had been dug was not always clear.

**St Patrick's Chapel is located** at a popular tourist spot, and not surprisingly a lot of public interest was generated by the excavation. In order to satisfy this interest, Pete Crane, **Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Archaeologist conducted tours of the** excavation on demand, assisted by other members of the excavation team when necessary. During the course of the excavation approximately 1500 people were shown around the site.

### ***Trench 1***

The exposed section on the seaward side of what was designated Trench 1 in May was recorded in February 2014, which greatly helped our understanding of the stratigraphic sequence during the excavation (Fig. 3).

As noted above there is likely to be an old ground surface preserved beneath the wind-blown sand, but the excavation was not deep enough to find this. Following initial accumulation of sand there was a period of stability during which a soil formed. This soil (45) was a distinct layer, with its black, charcoal-rich surface sharply contrasting with the wind-blown sand above (Photo. 9). Samples were taken from the charcoal-rich areas for possible analysis and radiocarbon dating.

Wall 42 was constructed after approximately 0.3m of wind-blown sand had accumulated over the soil (45). This wall was slightly curved and ran parallel to the eastern edge of the Trench (partially under the edge of the trench), measured 8m long N-S, and at its southern and northern ends turned through right angles to the east (Photos 11-13). It

was 0.9m wide and stood at its southern end up to six courses high (1m), but was on average 2-3 courses high (0.5m). It was a dry-stone construction, of beach boulders, with the largest 0.9m x 0.6m x 0.6m. This boulder lay on the south side of a 0.9m wide entrance through the middle of the wall. A large, but smaller, boulder defined the north side of the entrance. Two stones in the entrance may have been deliberately placed to block the entrance. The right angle turns at the south and north ends of the wall suggest it was the west wall of a building or an enclosure, with an internal dimension of c.6.2. The wall was left *in situ* at the end of the excavation.

Wind-blown sand had accumulated around the wall to a depth of about 0.3m over which a thin soil had developed (44). Tumble from the wall rested on the soil and on wind-blown sand in areas where the soil was not present. A midden composed of a layer of limpet shells lay to the east of the wall, within what would have been the building or enclosure.

Numerous graves had been cut into sand, some partly into the wall (42) and some into sand above the wall. Whilst it was clear that most of the graves post-dated the wall (and some were dug when the wall may no longer have been visible), the relationship between the wall and some graves was not always certain. The location of some graves indicates that they were dug alongside the wall, and the possibility of several graves existing contemporaneous with its use cannot be ruled out. Several graves were in a row (cists graves 21, 23, 22, 24 and skeleton 204) indicating broad contemporaneity.

Several graves cut through a distinct compacted stony silty-sand layer (19) within the wind-blown sand. It was hoped to trace this layer in Trench 2 and obtain a relationship with the Chapel wall, but this was not possible as it would have meant excavating the trench to an unsafe depth.

Skeletons 206, 210, 211 had the longest stratigraphic sequence. The earliest skeleton (211) was partly destroyed when skeleton 210 was inserted, and both lay directly beneath the cist grave containing skeleton 206. A quantity of loose bone directly above the cist grave was probably from a later *in situ* burial, but as this was mixed with bits of rusty car parts and other human bone this could not be demonstrated with confidence.

### **Human remains**

**Skeleton 201.** No grave cut. Not in a cist. Below stone spread 10 and above skeleton 205. Head to the west, but with the head missing (due to erosion). The body was on its back but with the legs and arms slightly flexed. Probably an adult.



**Skeleton 202.** No grave cut. Not in a cist. Overlies skeleton 207/cist 23. Partial skeleton, largely disarticulated with the bones in a rough heap. Articulation of some bones suggests the body was not entirely de-fleshed when deposited. Adult?



**Skeleton 203.** No grave cut. Covered by a stone spread (11). Head to west. Poorly preserved, with the upper body dissolved. Adult?



**Skeleton 204.** No grave cut. Not in a cist. Head to west. Only parts of leg bones survived. The upper part of the skeleton is likely to have been removed by recent human action. Adult?

**Skeleton 205.** 0.5m deep grave cut visible in section. Not in cist. Head to west. Supine with left arm crossed over chest. Lower part of skeleton ran beneath edge of site and was left *in situ*. Adult.





***Skeleton 206/Cist grave 21.*** Cist grave with lintel and side slabs, no base slabs. The east end cut into the top of the wall 42, and some of the cist slabs were probably reused wall material. Directly overlay skeleton 210. Head to west. Supine with hands crossed over pelvis. Good preservation. Adult. A sherd of medieval pottery was found in the fill of this grave, possibly fallen in from overlying deposits.



***Skeleton 207/Cist grave 23.*** Cist grave with lintel and side slabs, no base slabs. West end of cist missing due to coastal erosion. Head to west. Supine with hands crossed over pelvis. Fair preservation. Adult.





***Skeleton 208/Cist grave 24.*** Cist grave with lintel and side slabs, no base slabs. The west end of the cist with the upper part of the body is likely to have been removed by recent human activity. Only parts of the leg bones survive. Head to the west. Adult?



***Skeleton 209/Cist grave 22.*** Cist grave with lintel and side slabs, no base slabs. The east end cut into the top of the wall 42, and some of the cist slabs were probably reused wall material. Head to west. Supine with right hand crossed over pelvis, left hand by side. Good preservation. Adult.





***Skeleton 210.*** Not in cist. Directly below skeleton 206/cist grave 21, and later than skeleton 211. Head to west, but missing due to coastal erosion. Supine with hands crossed over pelvis. Good condition. Adult.



***Skeleton 211.*** Not in cist. The right side of this skeleton was cut away when skeleton 210 was inserted. Head to west but missing due to erosion. Supine. Surviving bone in good condition. Adult.



***Skeleton 212.*** Not in cist, but under a large boulder and with a boulder at the head end of the grave. NE-SW aligned with the head to the NE. Pre-dating skeleton 203. Poorly preserved with just part of the torso surviving. Juvenile.



***Skeleton 213/Cist grave 47.*** In a small cist, 0.7m long with sides made of rounded boulders and lintel slabs. Head to west. Only part of the skull survived. Infant. A possible pottery sherd (409) came from the fill of the cist grave.





***Skeleton 214/Cist grave 48.*** A rough cist grave made mostly from boulders. Cut into the top of the wall 42. Aligned roughly E-W, but a slightly different alignment to the other E-W graves. Head to the west. Supine with hand over pelvis. Variable bone preservation. Quartz stone placed over a clavicle. Adult.



***Skeleton 215/Cist 50.*** Only the leg, east end survives – the remainder removed by erosion. E-W aligned with head to west. Only lower leg bones remain. Juvenile?



**Skeleton 216.** Not in cist. Partly below skeleton 209/cist 22. E-W aligned with head to E facing south. Arms and legs slightly flexed. Variable bone preservation. Adult. The foot bones of this skeleton may have been removed in February 2014 and included with skeleton 221.



**Skeleton 217.** Part of ?child's skull and teeth and possible long bone in loose sand – probably from a disturbed grave.

**Skeleton 218/Cist grave 26 with grave marker 27 (Find no. 403).** Cut through wall 42, and using some of the wall stones as part of the cist. The grave was 0.7m deep, with the cist's lintel slabs 0.3m below the top of the grave cut. No base slabs. E-W aligned with head to the west. Supine with hands crossed over the pelvis. Bone in good condition, but lower legs decayed. Skull slightly damaged and distorted due to pressure from lintel slabs. Adult (late 20s?), female. The east end of the grave lay beneath the edge of the site, **but all the bone was recovered.** The cist's side slabs were left *in situ* at the end of the excavation. A possible copper alloy shroud pin (411) was found amongst the hand bones.







***Skeleton 219/Cist grave 52.*** Small cist, 0.7m long, composed of rounded stones. E-W aligned with head to the W. Well-preserved skeleton of an infant, supine. Adult foot bones also in grave.



***Skeleton 220.*** Not in cist. Identified and removed from the eroding sand dunes in February 2014. Only the lower leg bones survived, the remainder of the skeleton having been removed by erosion. E-W aligned with head to west. Adult?

***Skeleton 221.*** The very crushed skull of a ?juvenile and other bone was removed in February 2014 from directly beneath cist grave 22. It was then assumed to be the head, western end, of a complete skeleton. However, in May 2014 no further bones of this skeleton were discovered. They may have been removed when skeleton 216 was placed



in the ground, or the skull may have been loose in the foot end of the grave of skeleton 216. Some foot bones of 216 may have been mixed with those of skeleton 221.

**Cist grave 20.** The east end of a cist grave with lintel and side slabs – the west end removed during the 1970 excavation? No bone survived – possibly removed in 1970?



**Cist grave 28.** Small E-W aligned cist grave, 0.88m long. Side slabs of slate and rounded stones. One large lintel slab surrounded by 20 small rounded quartz stones. No skeletal remains. In the photograph the emptied cist grave is shown with the excavated quartz pebbles in a pile. Infant.



**Cist grave 30.** Small cist grave protruding from the east edge of the excavation. The cist was made from rounded boulders with small quartz stones on it. Probably an infant's grave. Not excavated.

Sand continued to accumulate over the graves. The chapel (excavated in 1924) was constructed on wind-blown sand at a height considerably higher than most of the graves. It is possible that some of the graves are contemporaneous with this Chapel, but given the height difference between the bottom of the chapel foundations and the tops of the graves this is considered unlikely.

The placing of a car in a hollow was most obvious attempt at stabilising sand-dune erosion. This car or more probably a van, which was probably of 1960s date, lay directly over the cist graves 21 and 22. Other material comprised geotextile, bundles of wire, plastic sheeting and soil with stone and concrete.

Following excavation the trench was carefully back-filled and the seaward face battered and re-turfed. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority staff fenced off the area of the trench to prevent damage to the newly laid turves.

## **Trench 2**

This 1m wide c. 6.5m long trench was dug across and to the west of the west wall of the Chapel (as excavated in 1924) with the aim of assessing the condition of the wall and tying in the stratigraphic sequence in Trench 1 to the Chapel (Fig. 4).

The west wall (9) of the Chapel was 0.74m wide and stood to 1.28m high (Photo. 15). It was constructed from beach boulders and large slabs of quarried slate/shale, with no obvious bonding material. Coursing was random, although some of the slabs formed rough bands. Backfill from the 1924 excavation lay to the east of the wall. To the west lay banded wind-blown sand (13), with at the bottom of the trench at the west end the compacted stony silty-sand layer (19) encountered in Trench 1. Five sherds of medieval/post medieval pottery were found in the banded sand (13), but a clay pigeon and other modern artefacts evidenced disturbance to it.

## **Trench 3**

Trench 3 was 1m wide and c. 23m long and ran across and to the north of the north wall of the Chapel (Figs. 5 and 7). Its aim was to assess the condition of the wall and to evaluate the potential for archaeological deposits and features to the north of the wall. The wall (17) was 0.72m wide and 1m high and was constructed from rounded beach boulders and angular slate/shale slabs (Photo. 16). There was no obvious bonding material. There was a 0.38m wide internal foundation offset and a 0.14m wide external foundation offset.

Backfill from the 1924 excavation lay to the south (internal) side of the wall. To the north, immediately below topsoil in the centre section of the trench lay a modern deposit of black soil, boulders, concrete and some asbestos (6), and close to the wall a deposit of rubble and slate roofing tile (layer 8, find no. 401). This deposit (8) was probably the **spoil from the 1924 excavation, with the slate evidence of the Chapel's roofing material.** Wind-blown sand (7) lay beneath these deposits, having accumulated against the Chapel wall. A sherd of medieval pot (407) came from layer 7. A soil (16) had built up against the wall, but faded to the north. Below it a group of stones was probably the top of a cist

grave. To the north of the soil was a definite cist grave (18), with a poorly preserved skeleton. These two graves were left *in situ*, as was a layer of rounded quartz and slate fragments (14), and a revetment wall (15) against which the quartz/shale layer abutted (Photos 17 & 18). This revetment wall may have defined the limit of the Chapel yard. Wind-blown sand lay to the north of the revetment wall and also below it. At the northern end of the trench humic and dark grey bands were evident in the sand, leading to the suspicion that it is of a fairly recent accumulation, although there were no artefacts or other features to support this suspicion.

A *sondage* dug towards the northern end of the trench revealed boulders and a compact dark grey fine silt (loess?) geological deposit c. 1.2m below the wind-blown sand.

#### **Trench 4**

Trench 4 was 1m wide and c. 16.5m long and ran across and to the south of the south wall of the Chapel (Figs. 6 and 8). Its aim was to assess the condition of the wall and to evaluate the potential for archaeological deposits and features to the south of the wall.

The top of the south wall was 0.7m wide – the rest of the wall was not exposed (Photo. 19). Wind-blown-sand had accumulated south of the wall. Below the sand a band of rounded quartz stones, angular stones and fragments of slate (34) may have been path associated with the chapel, to the south of which was a deposit of beach boulders – these layers were not excavated.

A dry-stone wall (36 – Photo. 20) constructed from beach boulders lay c. 7.5m from the south wall of the Chapel resting on an old sandy soil (38). A rusty-brown coloured soil had developed against the south side of the wall.

A sondage towards the south end of the trench revealed very wet grey fine silt (loess) 1.58m below the ground surface.

#### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Volunteers from the local community with some from further afield carried out the excavation under the supervision of Trust staff. Thirty-five volunteers participated on the excavation, some for the whole two weeks, others giving just a few hours of their time. In total volunteers gave almost 1200 hours of their time to the excavation.

Pete Crane, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Archaeologist, and some of the volunteers, gave regular tours of the excavation to visitors and local people. Tours were provided on demand throughout the two-week excavation, with approximately 1500 people being engaged.

A small exhibition on the results of the excavation was produced and displayed in the Café at Whitesands over the summer months.

#### **ARTEFACTS**

401. Roofing slate. Two roof slates, each with a single peg hole. 290mm x 180mm x 8mm and 290mm x 135mm x 8mm. Made from local slate probably from Porth Lleug 300m to the north of the chapel.

402. Cross shaped stone, with a lightly incised cross on the face of the stone. A small panel of carved incisions below the cross could be an attempt at knot-work. Purplish coloured ?local slate/shale. 500mm x 210mm x 27mm. Found on the beach immediately below Trench 1 and also certainly eroded from one of the cist excavated cist graves during the winter storms of 2013-14. Photograph 23.

403. Grave marker. Cross shaped stone with the lower half of a coarse ring-cross incised on the face of the stone. The upper half of the cross is missing as the upper portion of the face of the stone has flaked off at the point where the cross arm was incised. 700mm x 270mm x 45mm. Bluish-grey local slate/shale. Set upright at the head end, west, of cist grave 26. Photograph 24.

404. Blue glass annular bead. 10mm diameter, 4mm thick. Found on beach immediately below Trench 1.

405. Rim sherd of pot. Dyfed Gravel Tempered Ware 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> century. From loose fill of cist grave 21. Possible fallen into grave from overlying deposits.

406. Five sherds of medieval/post-medieval pottery. From layer 13.

407. Rim sherd of medieval pottery. Possibly Saintonge ware. From Trench 3, layer 7.

409. Possible sherd of coarse pottery from cist grave 47.

410. Sherd of jug handle. Medieval. From topsoil, Trench 1.

411. Copper alloy pin. Possible shroud pin. 30mm long, bent double, 2mm diameter. Found amongst hand bones of skeleton 218 during post-excavation cleaning.

## **SAMPLES**

301. Bulk sample for flotation from layer 41.

303. Bulk sample for flotation from layer 41.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Cadw and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) funded the excavation, which was undertaken by Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) and PCNPA. An enthusiastic and dedicated crew of 45 volunteers excavated the site under the supervision of Ken Murphy, Hubert Wilson and Marion Page of DAT and Pete Crane of PCNPA. The excavation would not have been possible without volunteer help. The smooth running of an excavation depends on numerous organisations and individuals including: PCNPA staff who fenced the site following back-filling, Gerallt Nash and John Beer for allowing the use of their field for car parking and pitching tents for a site office, Polly Groom of Cadw for facilitating Scheduled Monument Consent at short notice, and Rekha Gohil of the Ministry Justice for her help in obtaining a Burial Licence.

## **REFERENCES**

Badger A B and Green F, 1925. 'The Chapel traditionally attributed to St. Patrick, Whitesands Bay, Pembrokeshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 80, 87-120.

The archive Douglas Hague's 1970 excavation at St Patrick's Chapel held by the National Monuments Record, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth.



## FIGURES

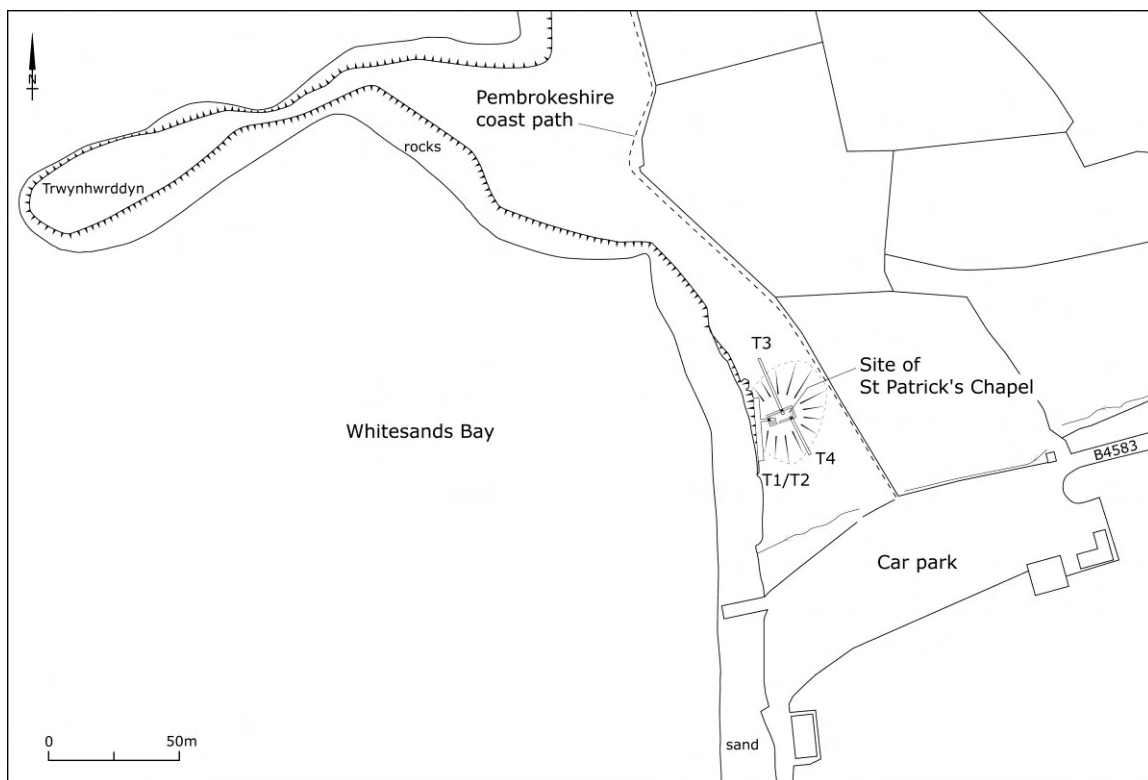


Figure 1. Location map.

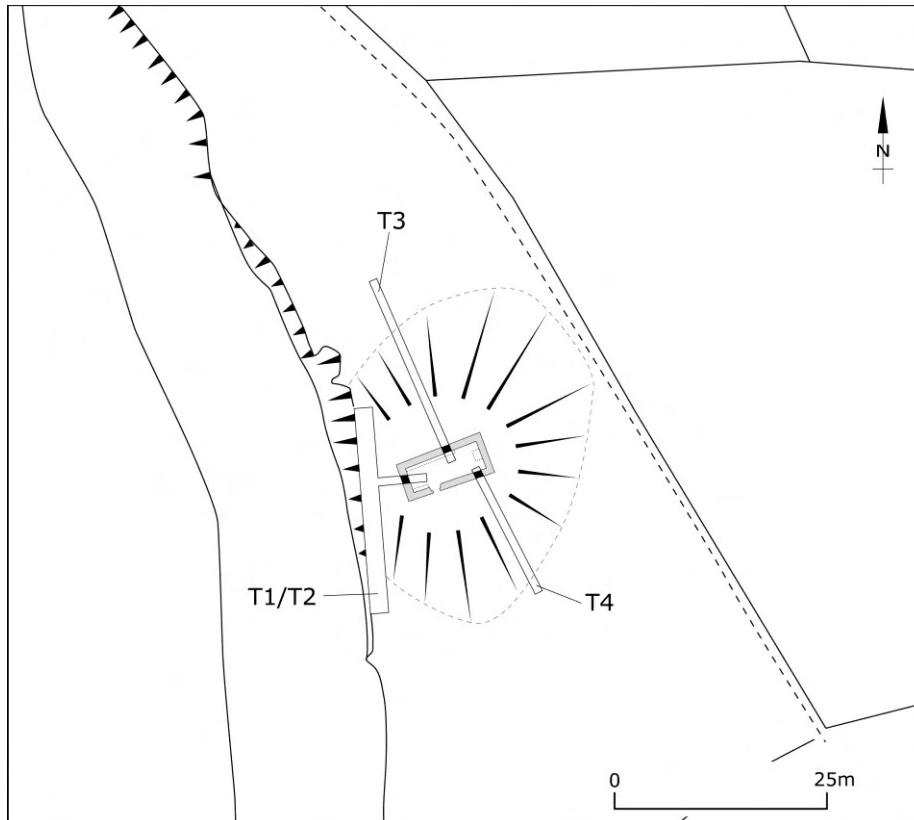


Figure 2. Location of excavation trenches.

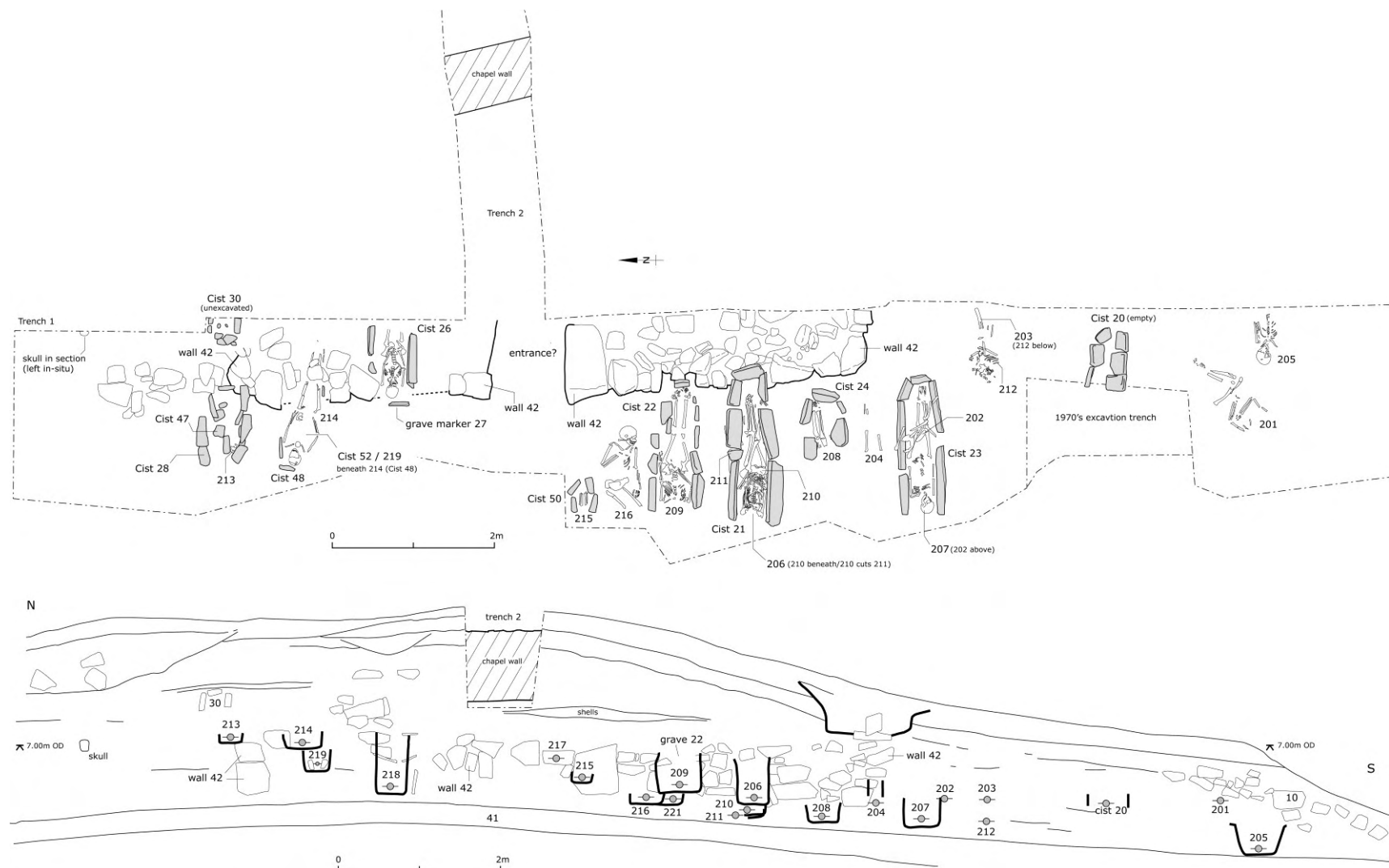


Figure 3. Plan and section of Trench 1.

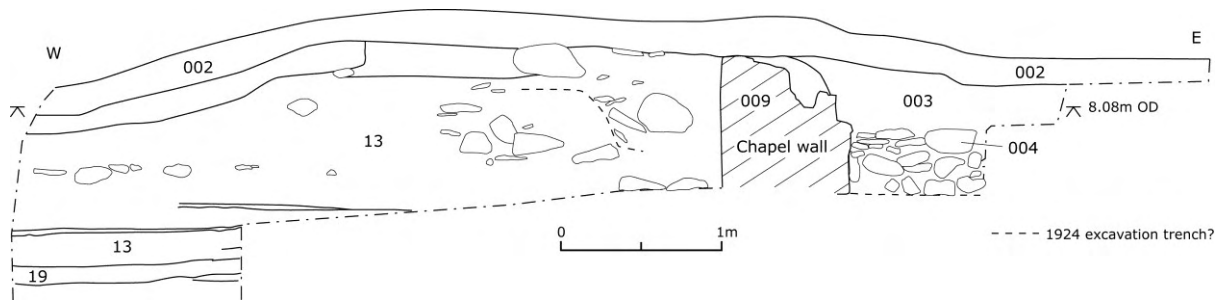


Figure 4. Section of Trench 2.

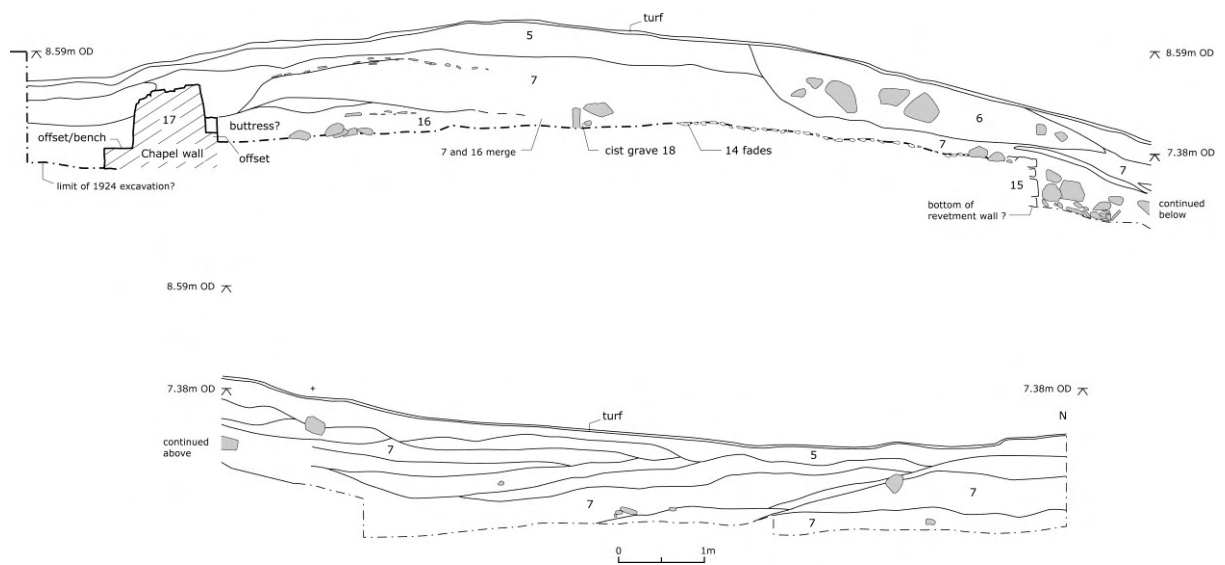


Figure 5. Section of Trench 3.

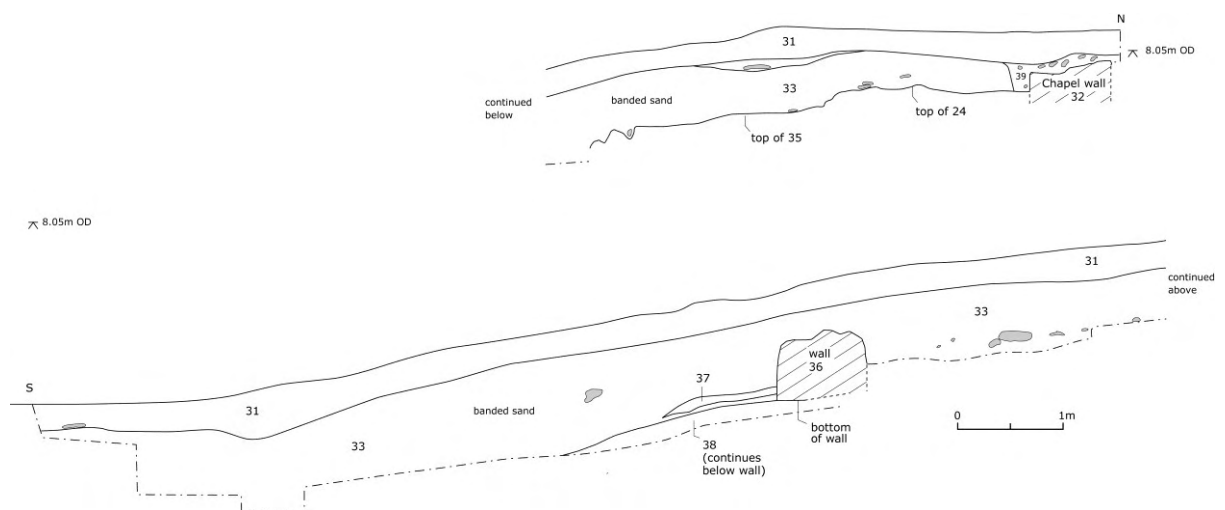


Figure 6. Section of Trench 4.

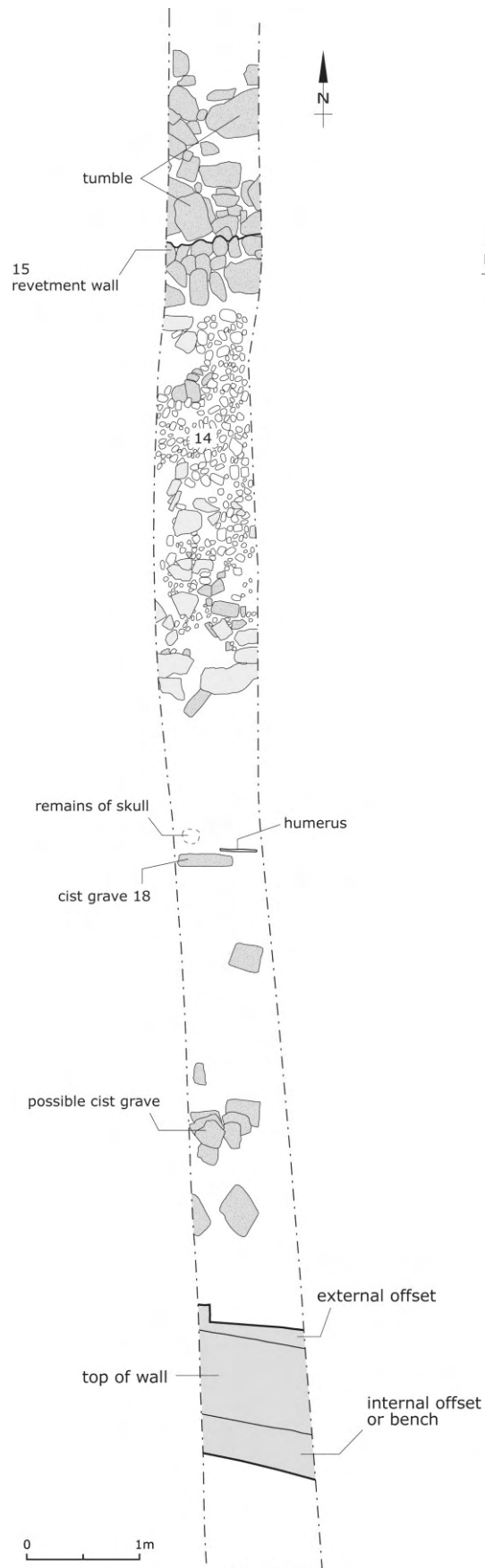


Figure 7. Plan of Trench 3.

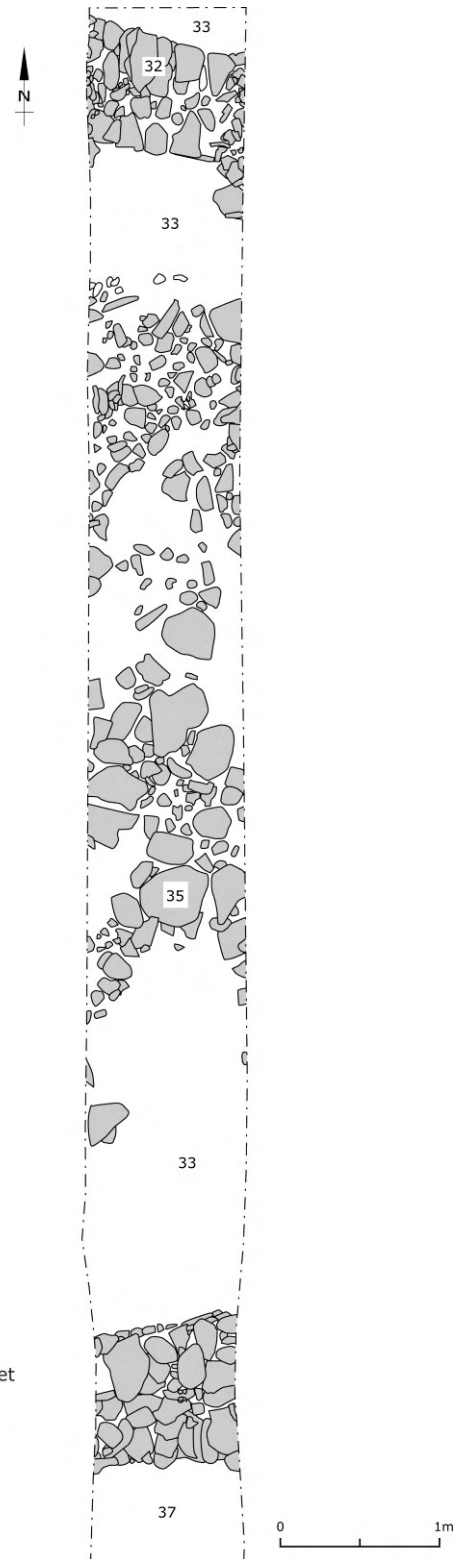


Figure 8. Plan of Trench 4.



## PHOTOGRAPHS



Photograph 1. View of the site looking north-east from the beach with Carn Llidi in the background.

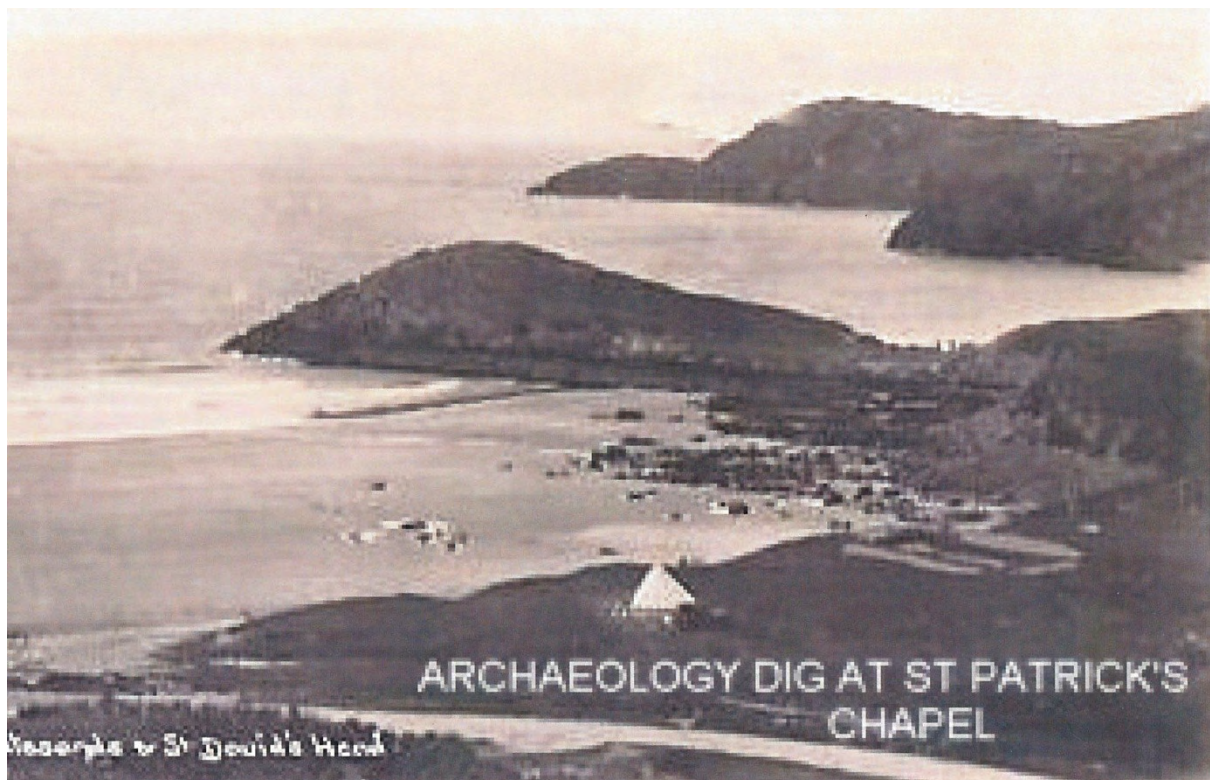


Photograph 2. General view of the site looking south.





Photograph 3. General view of the site from the south.



Photograph 4. Postcard showing the 1924 excavation (supplied by Roy Lewis).





Photograph 5. The car buried in the upper levels of Trench 1.



Photograph 6. Stone layer 10 in Trench 1.





Photograph 7 and 8. General views of Trench 1 under excavation.



Photograph 9. Photograph of Trench 1 showing the dark soil layer (45) below wind-blown sand.





Photograph 10. The site showing the excavation of Trench 1.



Photograph 11. The face of wall 42 is to the right with wind-blown sand accumulated against it and a dark soil layer 44 at the top of the scale, over which there is tumble from the wall.





Photograph 12. Trench 1 showing wall 42.



Photograph 13. Wall 42 in Trench 1.





Photograph 14. The excavation team standing above the back-filled and restored Trench 1.



Photograph 15. Wall 9 in Trench 2.



Photograph 16. Wall 17 in Trench 3.



Photograph 17. The revetment wall 15 with the quartz/slate surface 14 beyond.





Photograph 18. The quartz/slate surface (14) in Trench 3.



Photograph 19. Trench 4, with the south wall of the Chapel in the foreground, the quartz/stone layer beyond and the dry-stone wall (36) at the far end of the trench.



Photograph 20. Trench 4 with dry-stone wall 36 in the foreground.





Photograph 21. Aerial photograph of the excavations. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (AP\_2014\_1119).



Photograph 22. Detail of above aerial photograph. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (AP\_2014\_1119).





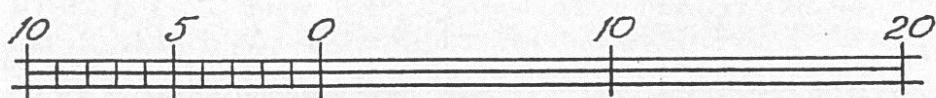
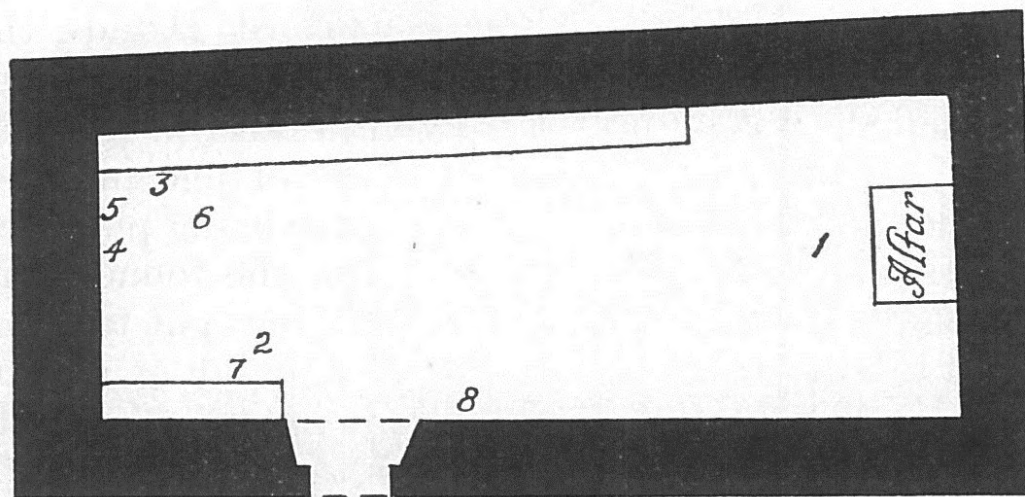
Photograph 23. Cross shaped stone (401) found on the beach below Trench 1.



Photograph 24. Cross shaped stone (403) set upright at the west end of cist grave 26.



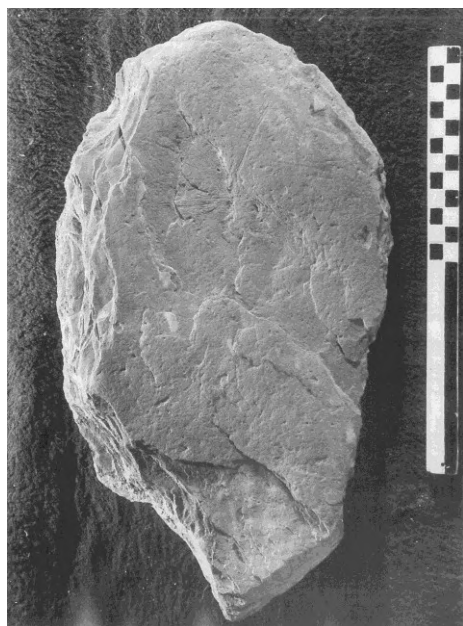
# CHAPEL *of* ST PATRICK *Whitesands Bay, St Davids.*



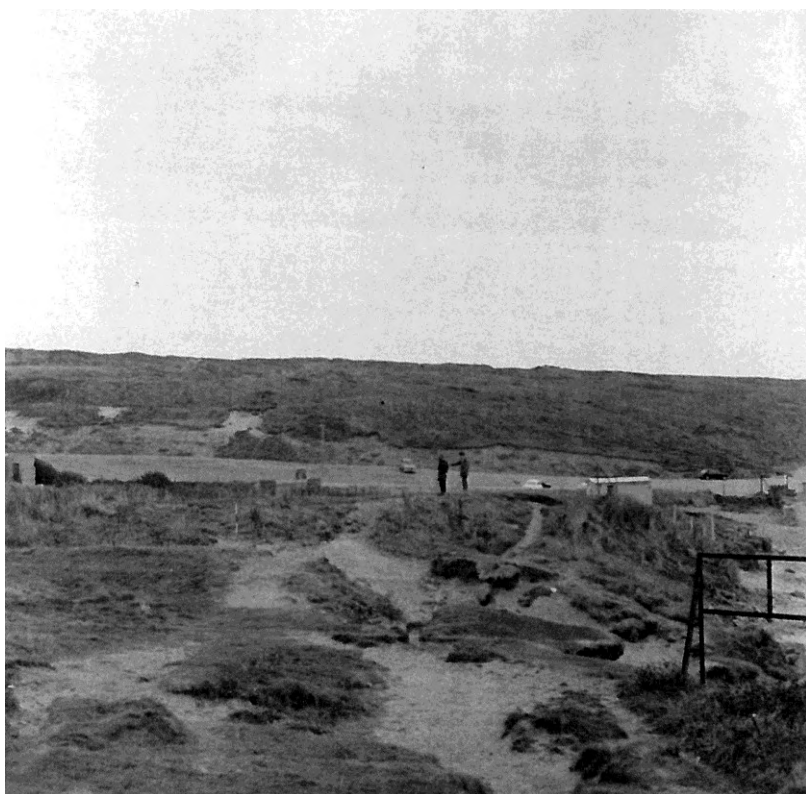
*Scale of Feet.*

*Ernest A. R. Rahibula.  
Mens & Del't. 1924.*

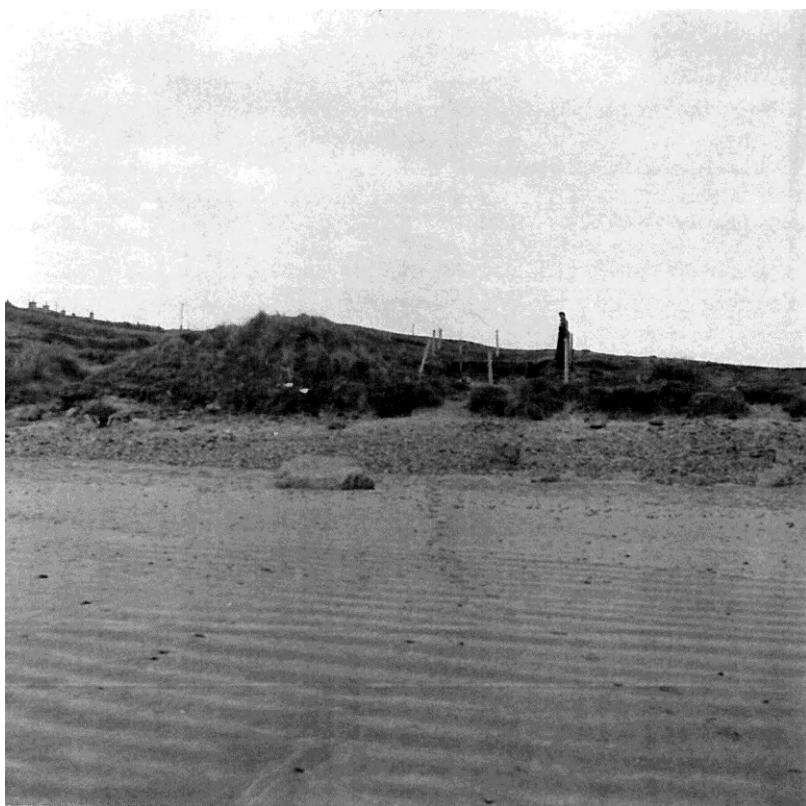
Photograph 25. Plan of the Chapel excavated in 1924. Reproduced from Badger and Green 1925.



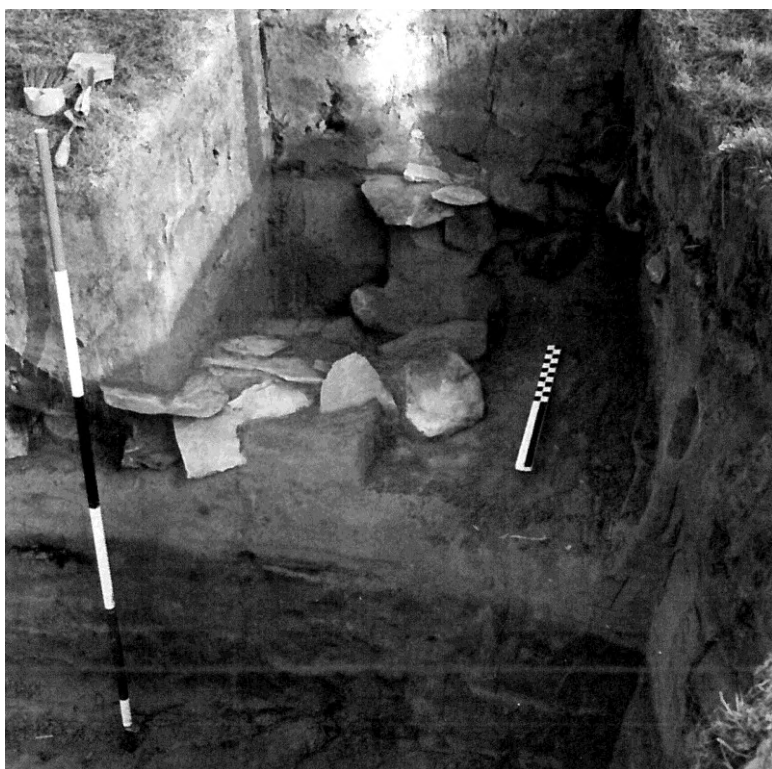
Photograph 26. Grave marker found during the 1970 excavation. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.



Photograph 27. Photograph taken during the 1970 excavation showing visitor erosion. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.



Photograph 28. General view of the site taken during the 1970 excavation. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.



Photograph 29. Shot of the 1970 excavation trench. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.



Photograph 30. Shot of the 1970 excavation trench. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

# **EXCAVATION AT ST PATRICK'S CHAPEL 2014 INTERIM REPORT**

**REPORT NUMBER 2014/26**

**June 2014**

This report has been prepared by K Murphy

Position: Trust Director

Signature

Date

This report has been checked and approved by

on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position:

Signature

Date

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



**INVESTOR IN PEOPLE**  
**BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL**