

MRS JOHNES' FLOWER GARDEN, HAFOD



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: The Hafod Trust



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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2010/29
Project No 99577

Mai 2010
May 2010

Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden, Hafod

Gan / By

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MRS JOHNES' FLOWER GARDEN, HAFOD

SUMMARY

The Hafod Trust is in the process of restoring a small woodland garden known as Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden at Hafod, Ceredigion. At the beginning of this project in March 2009 Dyfed Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief during road diversion. During this work a trench was cut across the line of an old path in the garden to investigate its character. As restoration progressed the Hafod Trust decided that more information on the nature of the garden paths was required, and therefore the Dyfed Archaeological Trust was commissioned to excavate two more trenches. This work was done in May 2010.

The paths were very simple in character, consisting of a spread of stones resting on subsoil. No kerbstones or other edging was present, and it is likely that none ever existed. During the second half of the 20th century the garden was planted with coniferous trees; these were removed in the early 21st century. Even allowing for loss and damage caused by the coniferous plantation, it is probable that the paths were never much more than informal bands of loose stones that survived in 2010.

INTRODUCTION

Scope of the project

The project was designed to provide information on the character, extent and state of preservation and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits of the former garden paths within Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden at Hafod, Ceredigion.

Report outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the evaluation results and the conclusions based on those results. Copies of field notes are also included.

Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Ordnance Survey is abbreviated to OS.

THE SITE

Location

Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden is located in the Hafod Estate, Pontrhydygroes, Ceredigion (SN7667673124 – PRN 26,521). It dates from the late 18th century, but seems to have gone into decline during the 19th century, although it and the paths within it were depicted on the first edition of the OS 1:2500 map at the end of that century. Post WW2 a road was driven through the garden and the garden planted with coniferous woodland. In 2009-10 the road was diverted around the garden and its former course restored, and the coniferous plantation cleared.

Archaeological Potential

There was potential for former garden paths within Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden.

METHODOLOGY

A machine-dug trench (Trench A) was opened on the 4 March 2009 during a watching brief when the road through the garden was being diverted. This was rapidly cleaned and recorded. Two hand-dug trenches were excavated on 24 May 2010 to record further information on the make up of the former garden paths. These were back-filled on completion of the investigation.

RESULTS

Trench A

Trench A was located over the circuit path on the northwest side of the garden. The path was found to coincide with the position of the one shown on the 1st Edition OS 1:2500 map, though narrower (Fig. 1).

Topsoil: c. 100mm thick. Loose dark-brown silty-loam with occasional stones and gravel.

Path: 0.7m wide, c. 50-70mm thick. A band, slightly ridged, made of angular pieces of blue-grey shale. Pieces 100mm x 50mm x 10mm down to 20mm x 10mm x 5mm, plus occasional rounded stones present. The shale and stones were very loosely laid and rested directly on the subsoil. The colour of the path sharply contrasted with that of the subsoil.

Subsoil: Gravel and occasional cobbles in a yellowish/orange-brown silty matrix.

Trench 1 (Photo 1)

Trench 1 was located over the circuit path on the west side of the garden. The path was found to coincide with the position of the one shown on the 1st Edition OS 1:2500, though narrower.

Topsoil: c. 180mm thick, but less, c. 120mm thick over the path. Loose mid/dark brown, loose silty-loam with occasional small/medium-sized rounded stones. High organic content and many roots. A sherd of a red pottery flower pot was found in the topsoil.

Path: A slightly raised band of loose stones and gravel, c. 1.5m wide. It was very poorly defined, with the stones spread over the neighbouring subsoil. Occasional river cobbles (200mm x 100mm x 50mm) were present, but most of this layer was made up of rounded stones c. 50mm x 20mm x 20mm and gravel. The gravel was patchy, but where present formed a coherent surface. The path had been laid in a shallow, linear hollow (c. 100mm deep maximum) scraped out of the subsoil. At its thickest, this layer of stones and gravel making up the path was c. 150mm thick. It is likely that most material for this path was obtained from the river gravels of the Ystwyth 100m to the south.

Subsoil: Silty-loam, mottled in colour ranging from orange-brown to pale grey, with occasional cobbles.

Trench 2 (Photos 2-4)

This trench was located just within the east gate to the garden. The 1st Edition OS 1:2500 map seems to show the gate in a slightly different position to its present location. It has been suggested that it was relocated during restoration in the 1980s. The trench was located to ascertain whether the gate had been moved.

Topsoil: Almost non-existent. At its maximum 100mm of silty-loam, but generally just a skim of turf, roots and other organic matter.

Path: This was difficult to identify as it had been spread over the surface of the subsoil. It consisted of a c. 1m wide band of loose stones and soil – the stones comprising c. 70% of the total. Gravel was the main component of the stones, but with occasional cobbles and smaller rounded stones. The stony/soily layer making up the path was set in a shallow linear hollow up to c. 100mm deep. The path was aligned on the present gate, indicating the gate is still in its original location, and that the locational discrepancy between the 1st Edition OS 1:2500 map and the modern survey is due to differences in surveying and is not actual. It is likely that most material for this path was obtained from the river gravels of the Ystwyth 100m to the south.

Subsoil: Orange-brown silty-loam with occasional cobbles.

CONCLUSIONS

The paths within Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden were designed to be informal with minimal visual intrusion. In two of the trenches (1 and 2) locally sourced materials had been used ensuring that the colour and texture of the path blended in with the surroundings, making archaeological detection difficult. Angular blue-grey shale had been used in the path revealed in the third trench (Trench A). Shale of this colour has been seen outcropping close to the garden, so it is likely to be locally sourced. It was not possible to assess the amount of destruction caused by the coniferous plantation, as no control excavation was undertaken. However, forestry operations probably did not greatly affect the overall character of the paths.

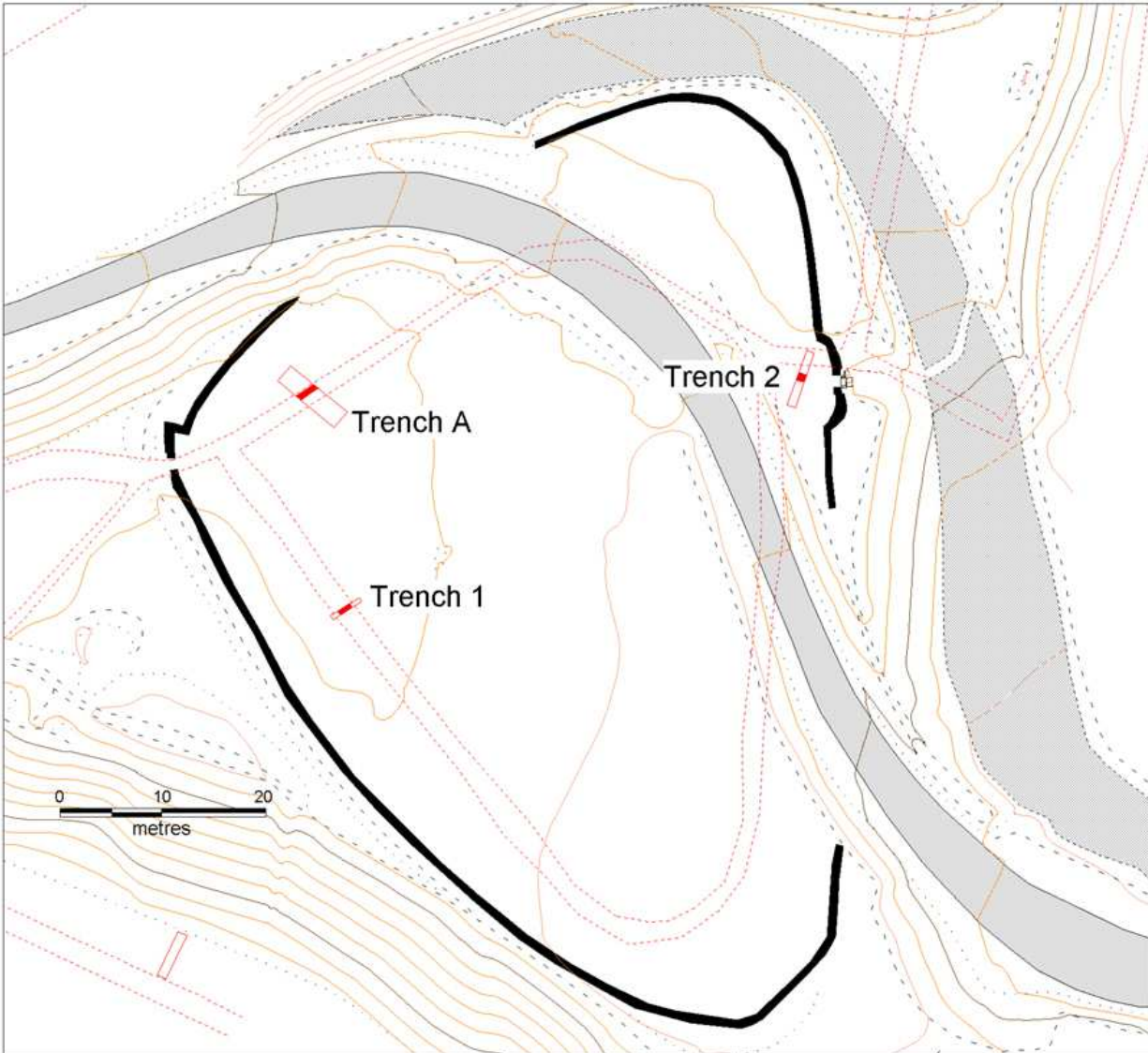


Figure 1: Location map based on the 2002 topographic survey. The dashed red line shows paths projected from the Ordnance Survey 1st Ed 1:2500 map. The excavation trenches are shown in red outline with the excavated path solid red.

Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden, Hafod

Photograph 1. Trench 1 looking east.
Scale 0.5m. The path is visible as a
slightly darker band running across the
trench.



Photograph 2. Trench 2 looking
east towards the east gate.





Left. Photograph 3. Trench 2 looking south. Scale 0.5m. The scale rests on the path running across the trench.

Below. Photograph 4. Trench 2. The path partly excavated showing the hollow in which the path make-up sits. Scale 0.5m.

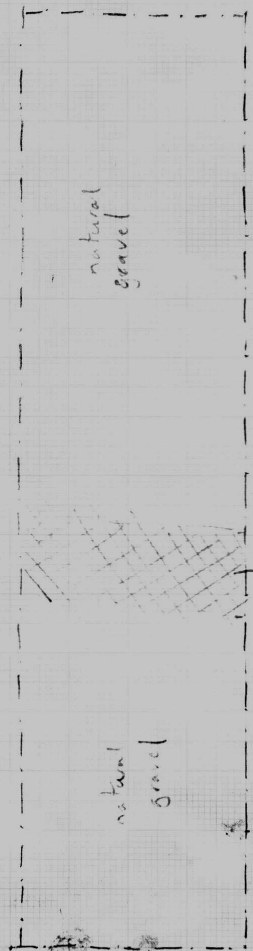


Hafod: Mrs Johnes' Flower Garden 4 March 2009 K Murphy

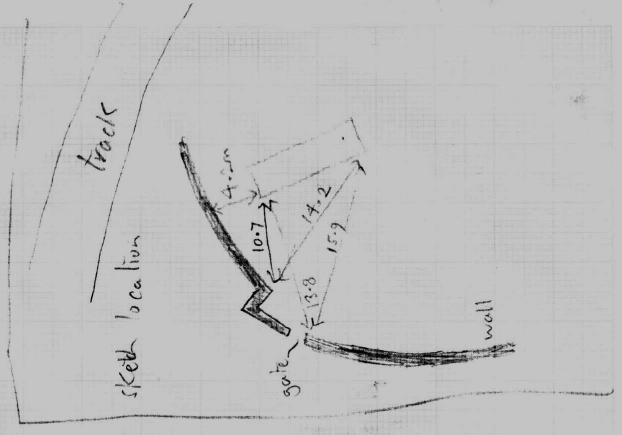
Trench in garden across the line of an historic walk

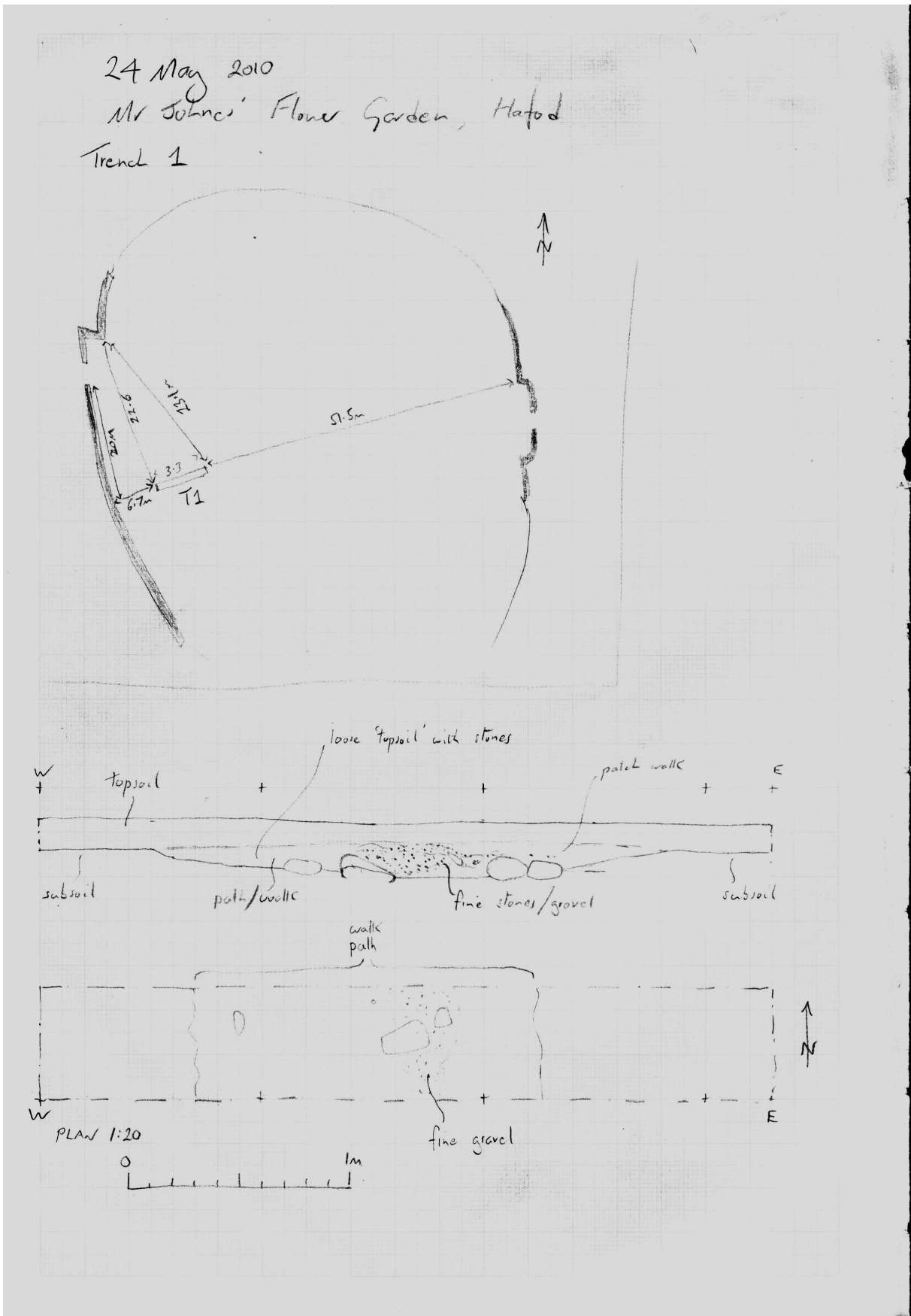
Scale 1:50

Topsoil: thin, c 10cm thick, dark brown silty-clay loam with gravel and stones
 Walk: c 0.7m wide band/ridge of angular pieces of blue-grey shales
 Pieces c 10cm x 50mm x loam down to 20mm x 10mm x 5mm. Occasional rounded pieces present. The stones are very loosely laid and rest directly onto subsoil. The band/ridge is c 50-70cm thick. The colour of the stones contrasts sharply with the subsoil.



Subsoil/gravel geology: yellowish/orange brown gravel/cobbles in a silty matrix.





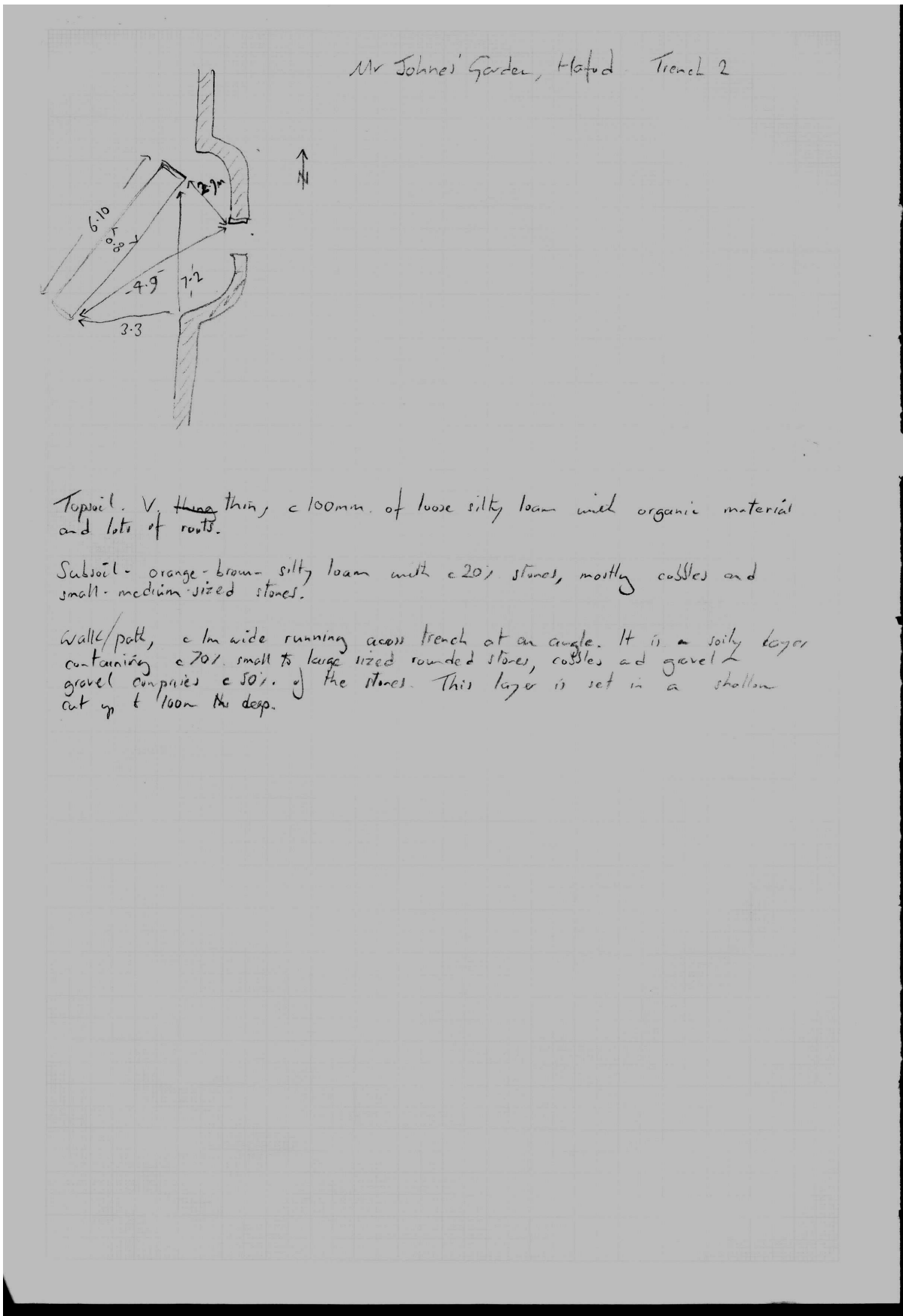
Trench 1

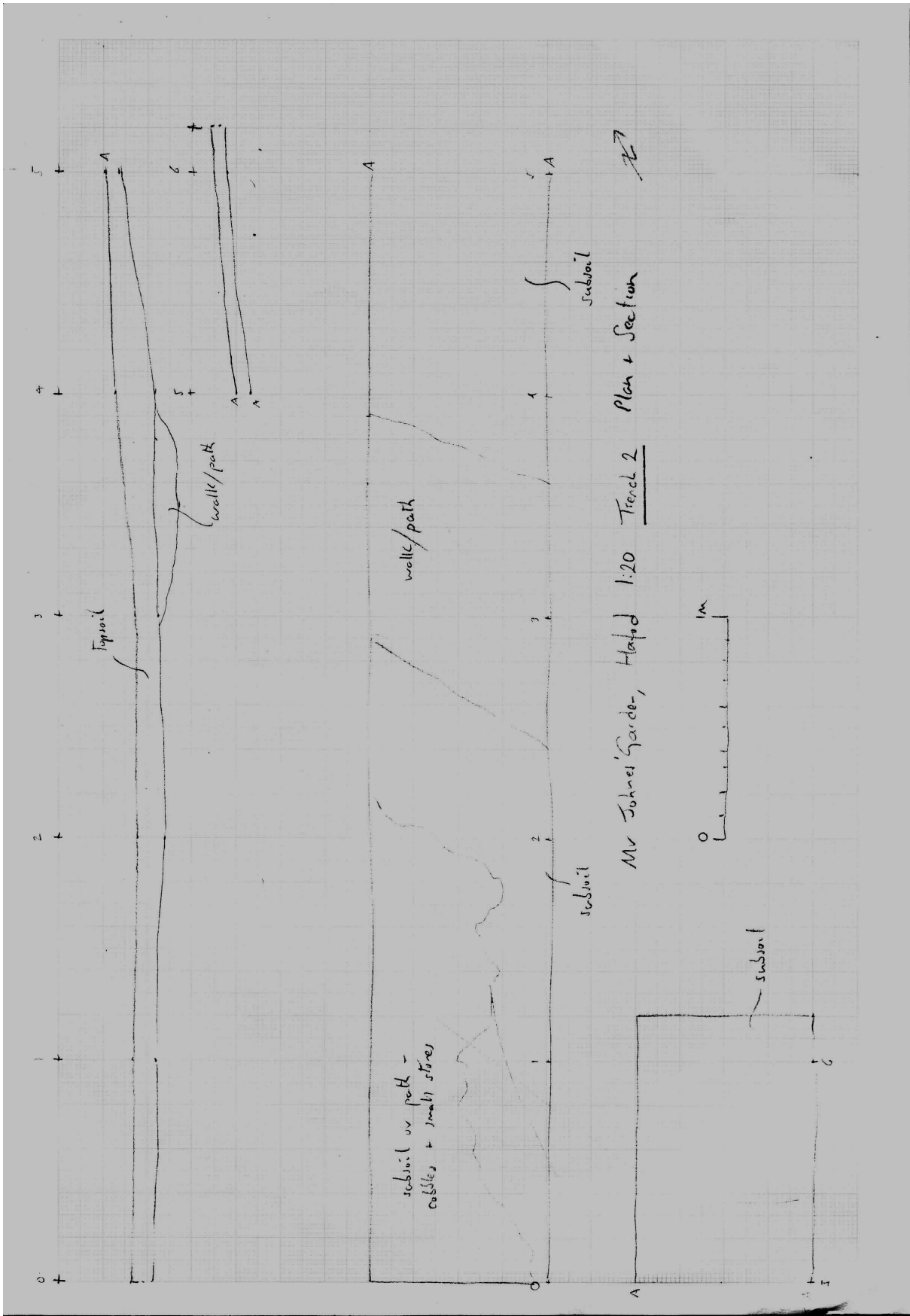
Topsoil 180mm thick, but thins to 120mm over path/walk. Comprises a mid-brown, loose silty loam with occasional small-medium sized rounded stones. High organic content + many roots. A stem of flower-pot was found at the base of the soil.

Walk.

Subsoil. Silty loam, mottled in colour ranging from pale orange-brown to a greyed pale grey. Contains c. 10% small-medium sized rounded stones.

Path/walk. Poorly defined, consisting of a stony deposit, slightly raised above the subsoil. Stones are rounded, the largest up to $\approx 200\text{mm} \times 100\text{mm} \times 50\text{mm}$, but in general are $50\text{mm} \times 20\text{mm} \times 20\text{mm}$. The stones are loosely placed and do not form a coherent surface. A small patch of v small rounded stones, (gravel) forms a more 'path-like' surface in the centre of the walk. On excavation - the path sat in a shallow hollow cut c. 100mm into the subsoil. The central area of the path comprised a layer of gravel/fine stones, but elsewhere loose soil with c 40-50% stones. In section the path appeared slightly wider, c 21m, than in plan.





RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NUMBER 2010/29

Mai 2010
May 2010

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

Swydd / Position: Trust Director

Llofnod / Signature



Dyddiad / Date 25.05.2010

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

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

Swydd / Position: Head of Field Services

Llofnod / Signature



Dyddiad / Date 25.05.2010

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

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