

A BURIED SOIL AT COLLFRYN, POWYS

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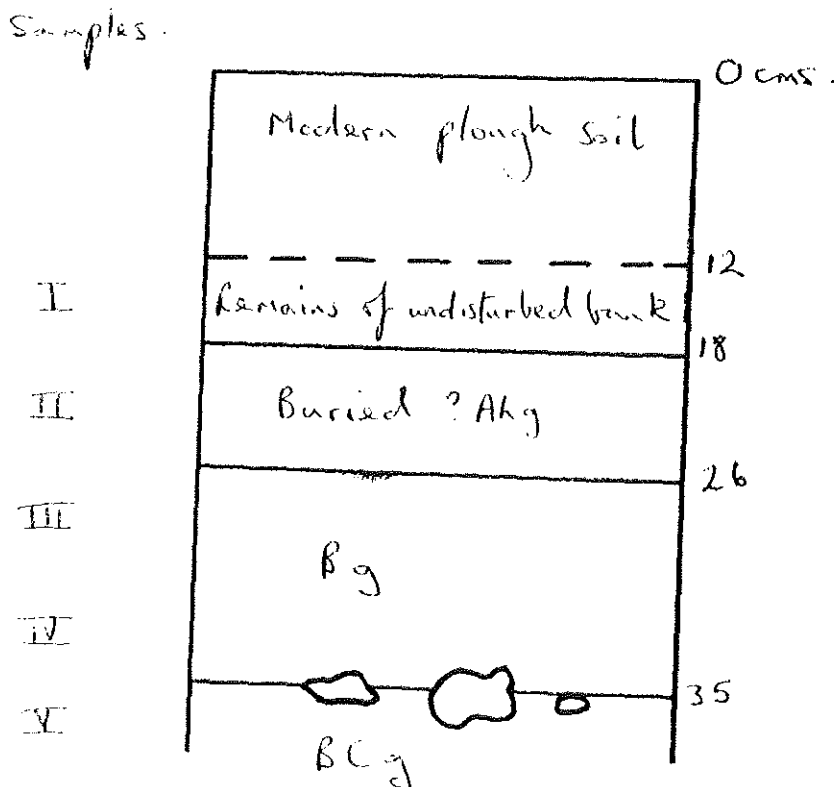
By Helen C M Keeley

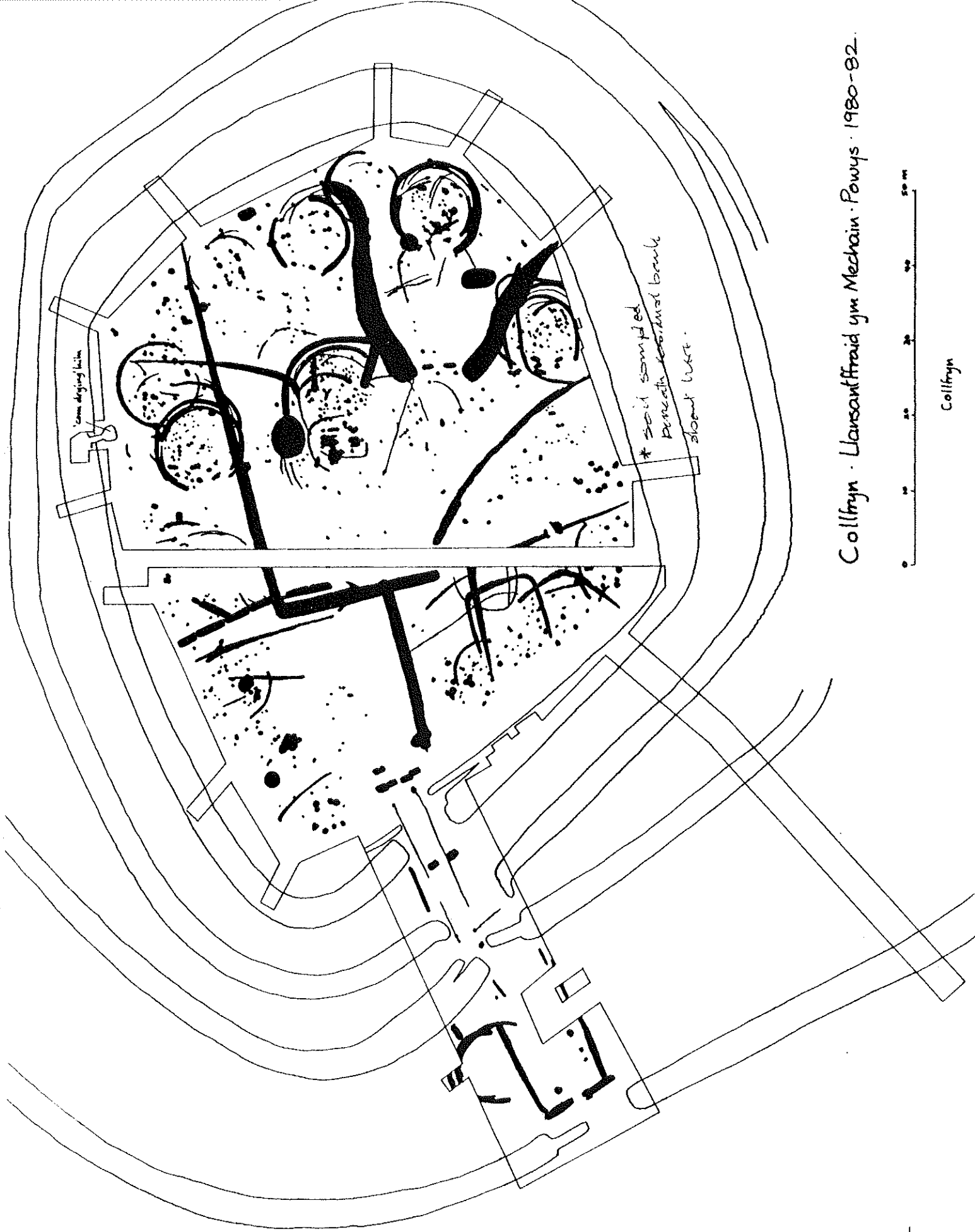
The Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Collfryn (NGR SJ 220172), consisting of an enclosure and its associated fields and entrance track, occupies a west-facing hillslope at about 100 metres OD, overlooking the valley of the Vyrnwy. Due to the threat of plough damage, excavations began under the direction of William Britnell (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust) in 1980 and continued intermittently into 1982. Interim reports may be found in the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust's "Review of Projects" of October 1981 (pages 6-9) and November 1982 (pages 2-7). The site was visited by the author in May 1982, when a soil buried beneath a bank was examined; a plan of the site is shown in figure 1.

A soil survey of the area has recently been published (Thompson 1982); soils are developed in drift deposits from Lower Palaeozoic rocks which are mainly marine sediments with some igneous intrusions. Around the archaeological site cambic stagnogley soils of the Cegin series (moderately stony subsoil phase) predominate, with typical brown earths of the Denbigh series in better drained areas upslope.

A buried soil below the remains of a bank was examined and sampled; a sketch diagram of the profile is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2





Collfryn · Llansantffraid ym Mechain · Powys · 1980-82.

Collfryn

Figure 1.

Earthworm activity throughout the profile was noted. Samples were analysed for particle size distribution and organic matter content (%loss on ignition) and results are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Sample No	Horizon	Sand (%)	Silt (%)	Clay (%)	Loss on ignition (%)
I	Bank material	27.92	40.00	32.08	7.07
II	? bAh ₃	27.35	37.14	35.51	3.73
III	Upper Bg	29.39	35.10	35.51	4.17
IV	Lower Bg	31.84	34.69	33.47	3.73
V	BC _g	46.40	32.00	21.60	2.46

Loss on ignition with depth is shown in Figure 3.

The bank material was yellowish brown (10YR5/6) firm clay loam with angular blocky structure containing occasional strong brown (7.5 YR5/8) mottles. It was moderately stony (30%) and contained charcoal fragments and many roots.

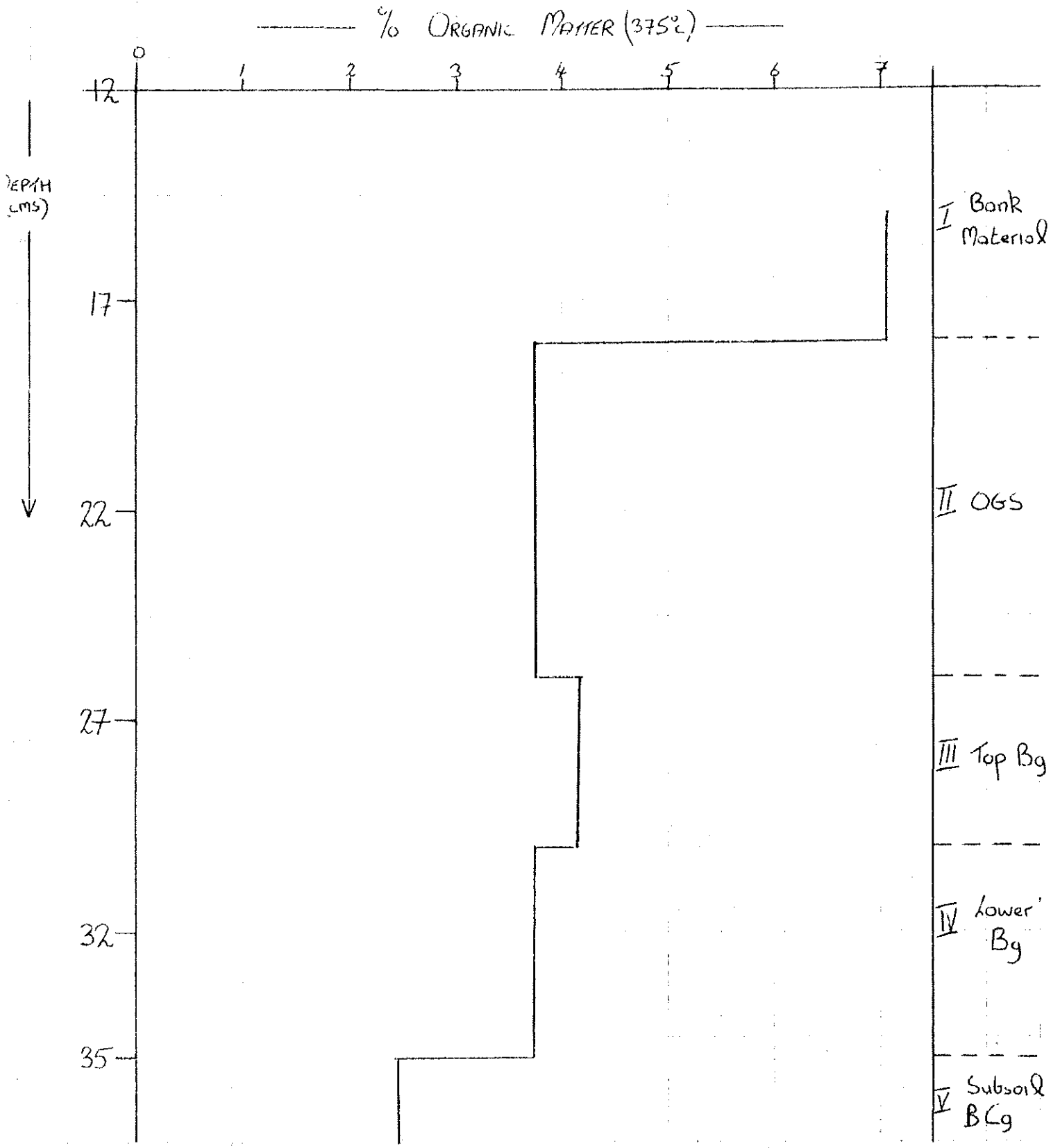
The top of the buried soil was relatively stone-free and appeared to be considerably compacted, consisting of brownish yellow (10YR6/6) very firm clay with angular blocky structure containing common strong brown (7.5 YR5/8) mottles and common medium to fine fibrous roots. % loss on ignition was much lower than in the bank material, suggesting that the upper part of the topsoil had been removed.

The Bg horizon was firm, yellowish brown clay (10YR5/6) in the upper part and brownish yellow clay loam (10YR6/6) below, containing very abundant strong brown (7.5 YR5/8) mottles and with angular blocky structure. Stones were few (5%) and roots common, fine fibrous.

The BC_g horizon had a layer of stones at the top and was greyish brown (10 YR5/2) firm clay loam with angular blocky structure, containing yellowish brown (10YR5/6) mottles and few stones (10%) and roots.

Figure 5.

ORGANIC MATTER PROFILE
COLLEFRIN '82 BURIED SOIL BELOW BANK I-V



The buried soil appears to conform to the Cegin series (moderately stony subsoil phase), being similar to the soils in **the** surrounding area.

References

1. Clwyd - Powys Archaeological Trust. Review of Projects, October 1981.
2. Clwyd - Powys Archaeological Trust. Review of Projects November 1982.
3. Thompson, T R E (1982). Soils in Powys II: Sheet SJ 21 (Arddleen). Soil Survey Record No 75, Harpenden.