

CRICCIETH
SEA OUTFALL
SEWERAGE SCHEME

REPORT NO. 56

G1131

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

CRICCIETH SEA OUTFALL

WATCHING BRIEF ON SEWERAGE SCHEME

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for Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 56

CRICCIETH SEA OUTFALL, SEWERAGE SCHEME, WELSH WATER.

Background Information

During 1993 Welsh Water are undertaking improvements to sewerage processing in Criccieth. The proposals involve the construction of a new sewage main, sea outfall, pumping stations and control buildings. In early 1993 Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was invited by Welsh Water to review the scheme to establish the need and/or requirements for an archaeological response. Initial exploratory work was to involve a number of boreholes and trial pits along the route of the proposed main, some of which would involve ground disturbance within the area of the medieval town adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) area of Criccieth Castle. Subsequently it was agreed that GAT would conduct a watching brief during the excavation of two of the trial pits to help provide information for determining the level of response needed during excavation for the main itself.

Method and Aims

Arrangements were made with Welsh Water's sub-contractors, Exploration Associates, for GAT to monitor the excavation of two trial pits, TP120 and TP121 (see location plan). A working agreement was established at the site whereby GAT would be allowed reasonable time to record any significant information resulting from the excavations. It was hoped that the proximity of these two interventions to the SAM area and centre of the medieval town would produce results indicative of the presence and nature of any surviving archaeological deposits.

Locations and Observations

TP120

A trial pit 1.5m by 1.0m was excavated by hand at the north end of the layby in Marine Terrace, opposite the Marine Hotel. The pit was dug to a total depth of 1.5m and revealed a natural deposit of stony light yellow clay directly underlying a 0.10m depth of tarmac.

The deposit contained no finds or inclusions of archaeological origin. It must be assumed that the construction of the layby had removed any previously situated deposits entirely. The excavated pit was photographed and written descriptions made in the site notes.

TP121

A further trial pit was excavated by hand in Castle Square on the south side of the Square at the junction with Castle Terrace. The pit measured 1.5m by 1.0m and was dug to a total depth of 1.30m. Here the primary deposit was a stony yellowish brown clay of unknown depth (006). Overlying this was a 0.45m depth of firm mid brown silty clay, mottled with bright orange flecks, and containing a large proportion of poorly-sorted sub-angular stones (005). No inclusions were noted within this deposit. Deposit 005 was itself overlain by approximately 0.30m of mixed material consisting of a greyish brown silty clay with numerous stone, broken stone, and slate fragments (004). This deposit also contained shell debris, mortar fragments, and occasional modern pottery and part of a clay pipe stem. Over this layer large sub-angular stones, set in a greyish brown silty clay similar to 004, were observed to be forming what was interpreted as a former road surface (003). The final deposits within the pit represented the makeup of the present road surface. 0.10m of compacted hardcore (002) was overlain by 0.10m of tarmac (001). The south-east facing section was recorded by means of a scaled drawing (see Figure 2.) Written records were produced on standard record cards and black and white photographs were taken.

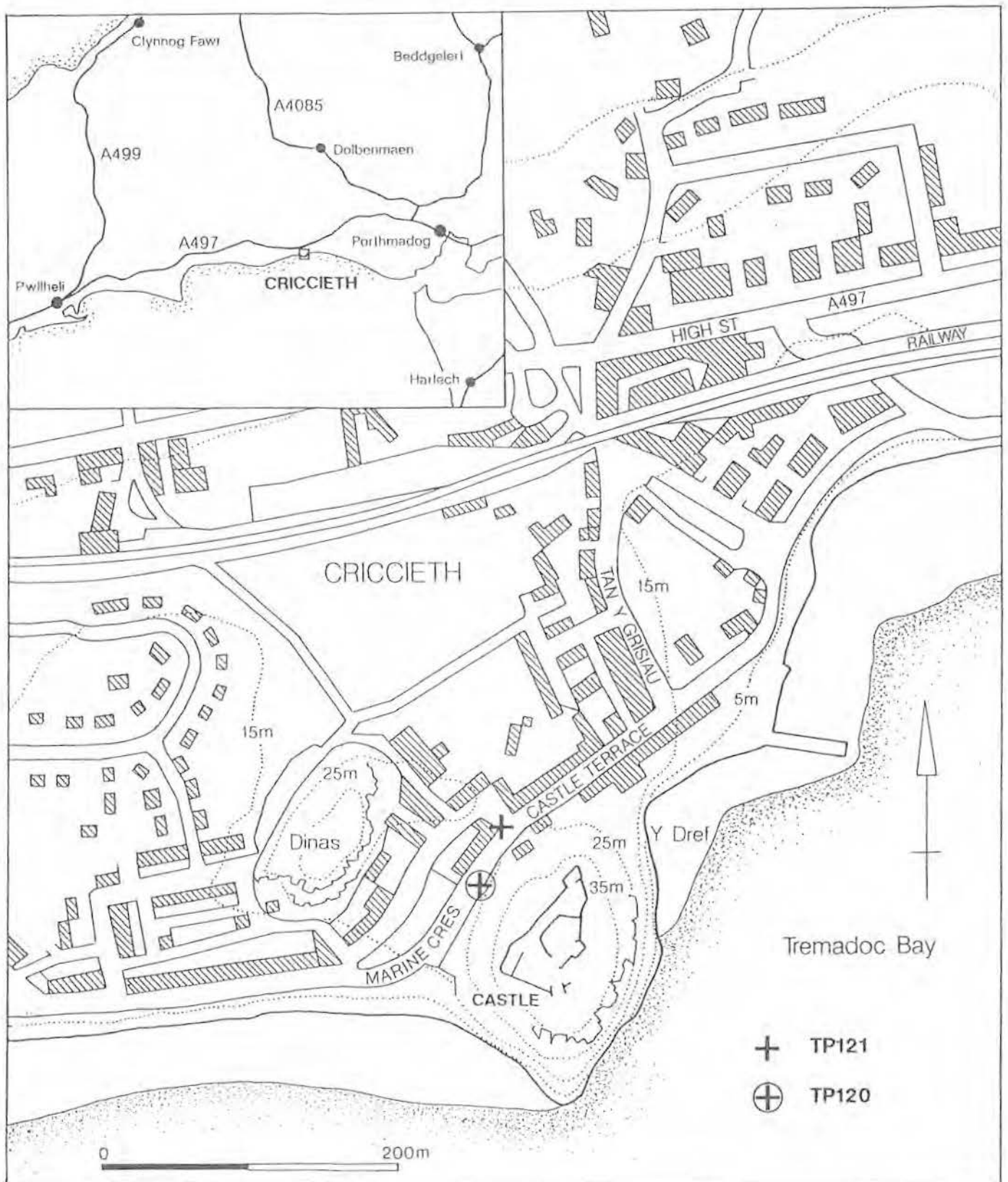


Fig. 1 Location Map.

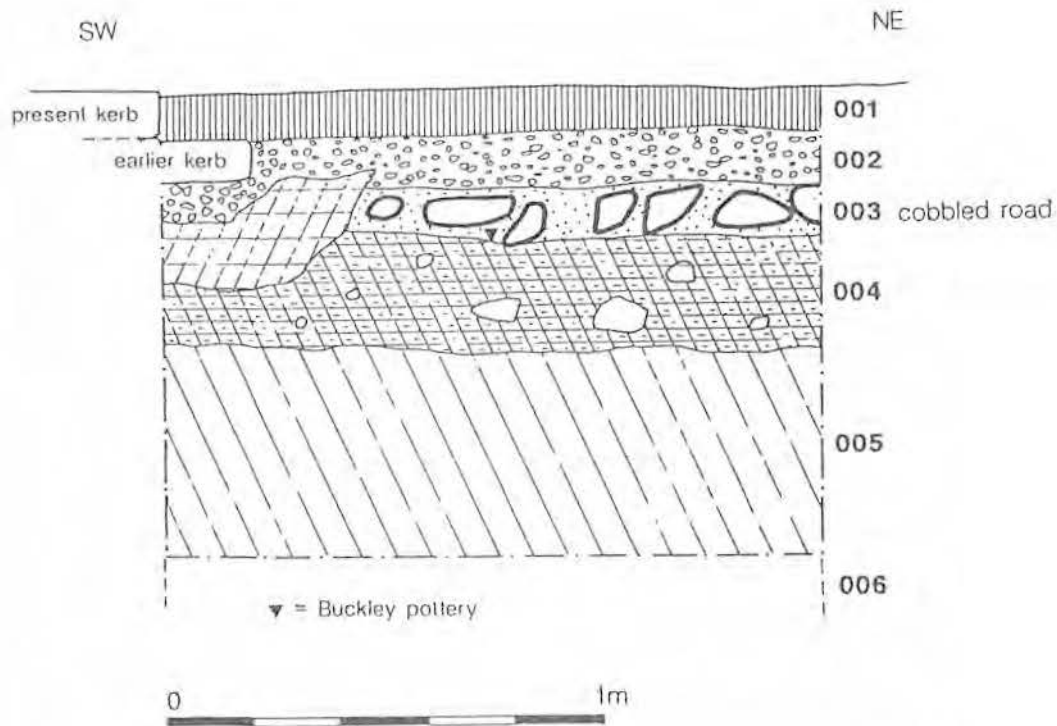


Fig. 2 S.E. facing section.

Conclusions

TP120 revealed no remaining stratigraphy relating to previous occupation of the town. TP121, while revealing recent activity in the guise of a former road surface, did not appear to reveal archaeological deposits representative of an earlier period than the nineteenth century.

Summary

The watching brief succeeded in establishing the nature of deposits in the two areas which were evaluated. It is likely, however, that further archaeological input will be required during subsequent stages of the scheme, due to the limited nature of this initial response.

Acknowledgements

GAT would like to thank Welsh Water for its continued assistance and cooperation and Exploration Associates for their helpfulness during the work.