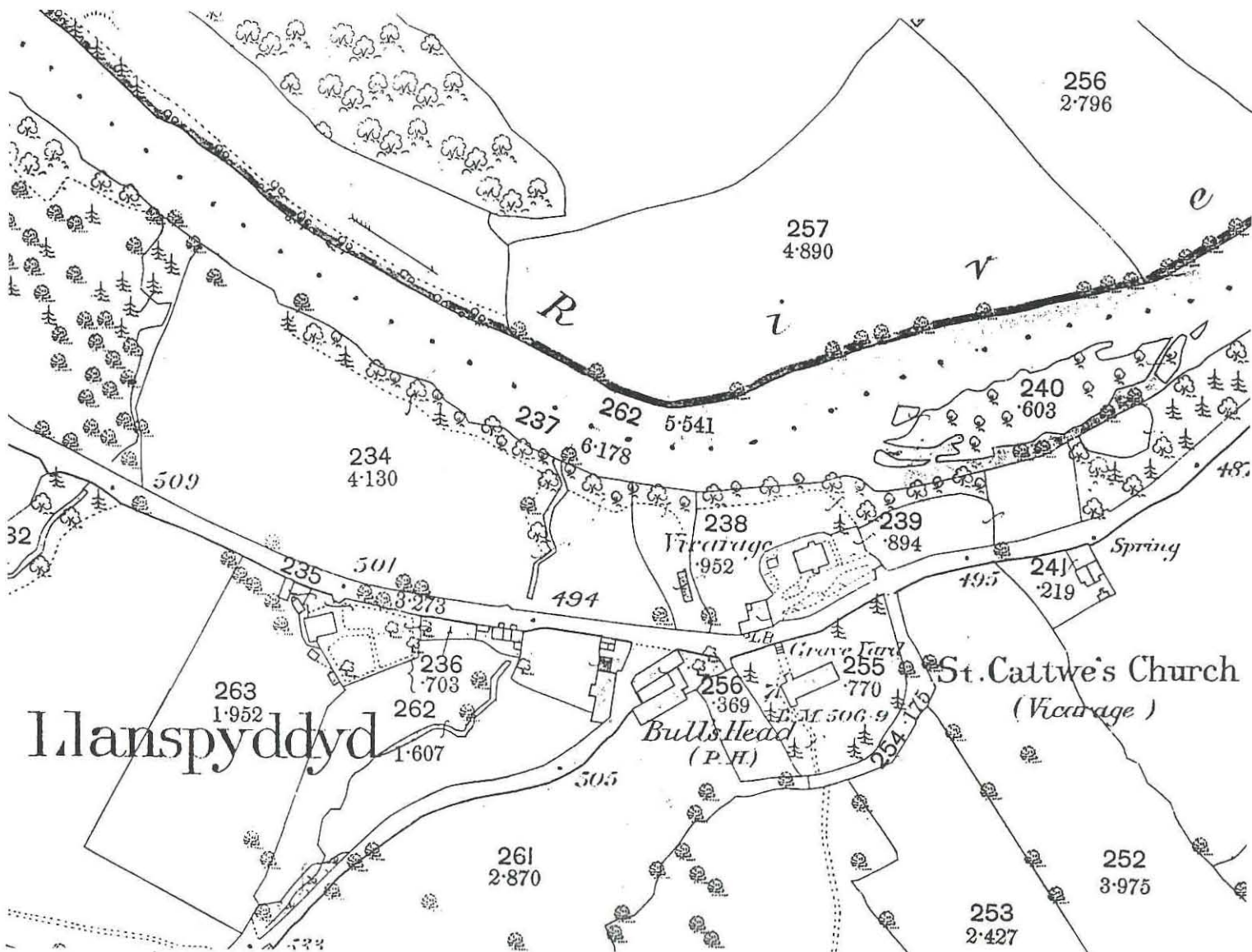


Llanspyddid Water Mains Renewal

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



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P.FROST
October 1997

Report for Dwr Cymru: Welsh Water

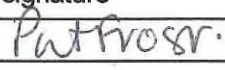


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CPAT Report Record

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 1997, the Contracting Section of Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) were instructed by Dwr Cymru: Welsh Water to carry out an archaeological watching brief at Llanspyddid, during the renewal of water mains by open trench method around the perimeter of St. Cattwg's Church (SO 0120 2820). The church is located 2.7km west of Brecon and immediately south of the A40 trunk road (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 Information held on the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) indicated that the scheme fell within the historic core of the village of Llanspyddid, which includes the church, first documented in the 12th century (Silvester & Dorling 1993). It was anticipated that the proposed work might reveal further evidence of Roman settlement, since scatters of Romano-British pottery were recorded during an evaluation to the west of the church in 1994 (Owen 1994). It was also anticipated that the work might reveal evidence of the extent of the postulated medieval churchyard.
- 1.3 Curatorial Section of CPAT, in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Dwr Cymru, determined that an Archaeological Watching Brief was necessary to record the archaeological resource during ground disturbance. Accordingly, a Curatorial Brief (No. WAT 235, dated 07/08/97) was prepared detailing the works required.
- 1.4 The known archaeological sites are listed in Appendix 1 and produced on Fig. 2 of this report. The sites are referred to by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and their Scheduled Ancient Monument Number (SAM).

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY and GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The assessment area is located on the south side of the A470 within the village of Llanspyddid, a settlement occupying a natural shelf on the south bank of the River Usk (Fig. 1).
- 2.2 The solid geology comprises old red sandstones of the Devonian period. The overlying glacial drift comprises red silty clayey soils, which were laid down during the Pleistocene period, when meltwaters from the Mynydd Epynt ice-cap flowed down the Epynt valley to the Usk (George 1970, 52-6).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scatters of Romano-British pottery were recorded during an evaluation trench on the former playground in 1994 (PRN 26549; Owen 1994). The finds included coarse pottery and a small number of samian ware sherds. The location of Brecon Gaer Roman Fort (PRN 598, SAM B1, SO 003 296) c.1.6km north-west of the church suggests that it would not be unusual to find occupation in the assessment area dating to mid-2nd century, the time of occupation at Brecon Gaer.
- 3.2 The parish church, dedicated to St. Cattwg (PRN 15934), comprises several phases of construction dating from the 14th century (Haslam 1979, 354). The Llandaff Charters (c. AD 1223-25) refer to "Llandespetit" church; the Norwich Taxations of 1291 record "Ecclesia de Landespetit" and the 1535 Valor Ecclesiasticus refers to "Llanspythytt". The church includes a late Norman stoup and the bowl of a 13th-century font, now reset.
- 3.3 The churchyard contains a small stone pillar carved with two circled crosses and dated to the 7th/9th century (PRN 599, SAM B121). On the basis of its shape, the original medieval churchyard is assumed to have included the playground and Llanspyddid Farm to the west of the present churchyard. During the archaeological evaluation in 1994, a bank and ditch were revealed which may have formed part of the southern boundary of this earlier and much larger churchyard (Owen 1994, 4).

4 WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.1 The watching brief was carried out according to the guidelines in the Curatorial Brief and involved the examination of all groundworks in the archaeologically sensitive area with the objective of recording the nature, condition, significance and, where possible the chronology of any archaeological deposits and/or features revealed within the area.
- 4.2 The watching brief was undertaken by the author and Mr W.G.Owen of CPAT between 18th September and 17th October 1997 and this report was written immediately after.
- 4.3 Removal of hardcore and the excavation of the pipeline trench by machine with a 300mm bucket to a maximum depth of 1.3m was supervised along the pipeline route around the postulated perimeter of the medieval churchyard (Fig. 2).
- 4.4 The spoil was examined for finds and the side of the trench inspected for features. No finds were recovered and there was no evidence for any archaeological features which may be associated with the former churchyard boundary. Any stratigraphy beneath the road sub-base was of fairly modern date.
- 4.5 On the south side of the church, the trenches followed the south side of the road c. 4.45m south of the churchyard wall, parallel to the kerb, which fronts housing constructed in the 1950s. The ground rises naturally south in this area and the excavated trench revealed hardcore below the road surface laid to a maximum depth of 0.16m above a reddish-brown silty loam with stone, which appears to be the natural subsoil. The direction of the road in this area, where it is parallel to the churchyard wall, is unchanged since the 19th century.
- 4.6 Further west, beyond the extent of the present churchyard wall and the playground where the 1994 excavations were undertaken, the road has a much more substantial foundation, suggesting a new road constructed in advance of the 1950s housing scheme. The foundation consisted of a layer of edge set stones c. 0.3m deep laid on the natural subsoil. The sub-surface at the junction of the two road surfaces, which corresponds to the north side of No.1 Heol Sant Cattwg and OS Plot 1210 (Fig. 2) is much disturbed by the laying of modern services.
- 4.7 A stone built land drain c. 0.5m high by 0.4m wide (Site 1), constructed with large slabs of sandstone, was encountered on the road junction, south of Llanspyddid Farm (PRN 31297) and farm buildings (PRN 31298). The drain runs north to meet ceramic pipes which continue to the A470 trunk road. Subsequent to encountering the land drain, the pipe trench continued north along already disturbed ground.
- 4.8 The watching brief was continued from the junction of the lane with the A 470 trunk road on the north side of the farm buildings, where a Victorian letterbox (Site 2) is sited in the farmyard wall.
- 4.9 The trench excavated along the A470 revealed two distinct layers of hardcore and tarmac, indicating an earlier road surface. The trench was excavated to c. 1m depth and the foundations of the roads were cut into the natural subsoil. The earlier road surface extended from 0.28 to 0.95m below the present road surface, which is formed by hardcore and concrete layers laid directly onto a thin layer of brown loamy soil laid over the earlier surface. These substantial road foundations extended into the lay-by, which fronts the church on the north side.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The watching brief revealed only one archaeological feature (Site 1). Along much of the pipeline, the ground had already been considerably disturbed, and no evidence was revealed for either the former churchyard or in association with the Romano-British finds from the 1994 excavations.
- 5.2 The churchyard ground level, on the north side of the church, is on average 0.8m above the present A470 road level and any archaeological features that may have existed in this area are presumed to have been destroyed by the construction of the road.

- 5.3 On the south side of the church, the land rises naturally to the south with the foundation for the present road lying directly on the natural subsoil.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The author would like to thank the Mr. Vincent Little of Welsh Water, and those involved in the construction work on the pipeline for their co-operation.

7 REFERENCES

George, N.T., 1970. *British Regional Geology, South Wales*. 3rd edition. London: HMSO.

Haslam, R., 1979. *The Buildings of Wales: Powys*. London: Penguin Books.

Owen, W. J., 1994. *Land Adjacent to Llanspyddid Church, Powys*. CPAT Report No. 91.

Silvester R.J. & Dorling, P.J., 1993. *Brecon Beacons National Park Historic Settlements Survey*. CPAT Report No. 44.

APPENDIX 1

PRN 598	SAM B1	Brecon Gaer Roman Fort	SO 003 296
PRN 599	SAM B121	Carved Stone Pillar	SO 0119 2818
PRN 15934		St.Cattwg's Church	SO 0119 2818
PRN 16497		St. Cattwg's Churchyard	SO 01192818
PRN 26594		1994 Llanspyddid Evaluation	SO 0114 2816
PRN 31297	Listed Building	Llanspyddid Farm house formerly Bulls Head public house.	SO 0113 2820
PRN 31298	Listed Building	Llanspyddid Farm buildings	SO 0110 2820
PRN 31300	Listed Building	Telephone Box	SO 0114 2821

Site 1	Stone culvert	SO 1110 2817
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Well built stone drainage culvert located in excavating the pipeline trench. Culvert appeared to run in a south to north direction, presumably taking rainwater from the fields and higher ground to the south and directing it between the farmhouse (PRN 31297) and the farm buildings (PRN 31298).

Site 2 Victorian letterbox SO 1120 2822

Set in stone wall forming the boundary of Llanspyddid farm buildings and yard at the junction of the A 40 trunk road and the access road to the village.

APPENDIX 2

MAINS RENEWAL SCHEME P489, LLANSPYDDID, BRECON: SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development at Llanspyddid, Brecon, involves the open trench renewal of a 110mm mains water pipe around the perimeter of St Cattwg's Church, Llanspyddid (SO 01202820).
- 1.2 This area lies within the historic core of the village of Llanspyddid as defined in CPAT Report 44. It is anticipated that the proposed work may well reveal archaeological deposits associated with the Roman settlement at Llanspyddid as well as features associated with the early Medieval churchyard boundary.
- 1.3 The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in their capacity as archaeological advisors to Welsh Water have determined that an Archaeological watching brief is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief has been prepared by CPAT Curatorial (No WAT 235 dated 7th August 1997) which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
 - 2.1.1 to record the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of any archaeological deposits and/or features revealed within the area of the proposed development during the development works in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be carried out according to the guidelines submitted with the Curatorial Brief and will involve the examination of all the groundworks in the archaeological sensitive areas.
- 3.2 All archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be recorded by drawn section and/or photography.
- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Brief (Section 8). This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Catalogue of sites identified with notes on their condition and significance, Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the watching brief.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the watching brief will take no longer than the scheduled groundworks timetable and that the subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and negotiated access. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

A.M. Gibson

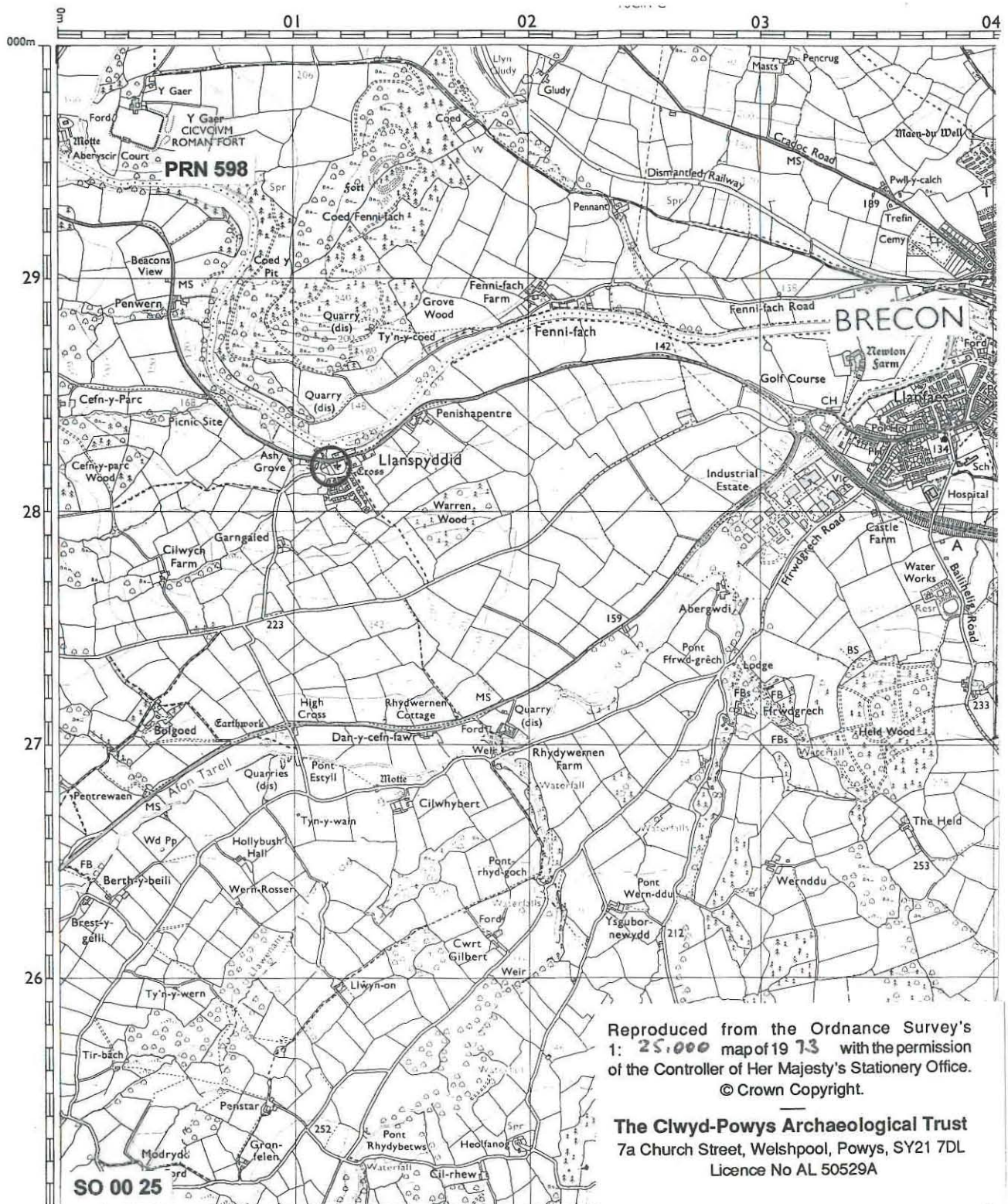


FIG. 1 LOCATION MAP SCALE: 1:25,000

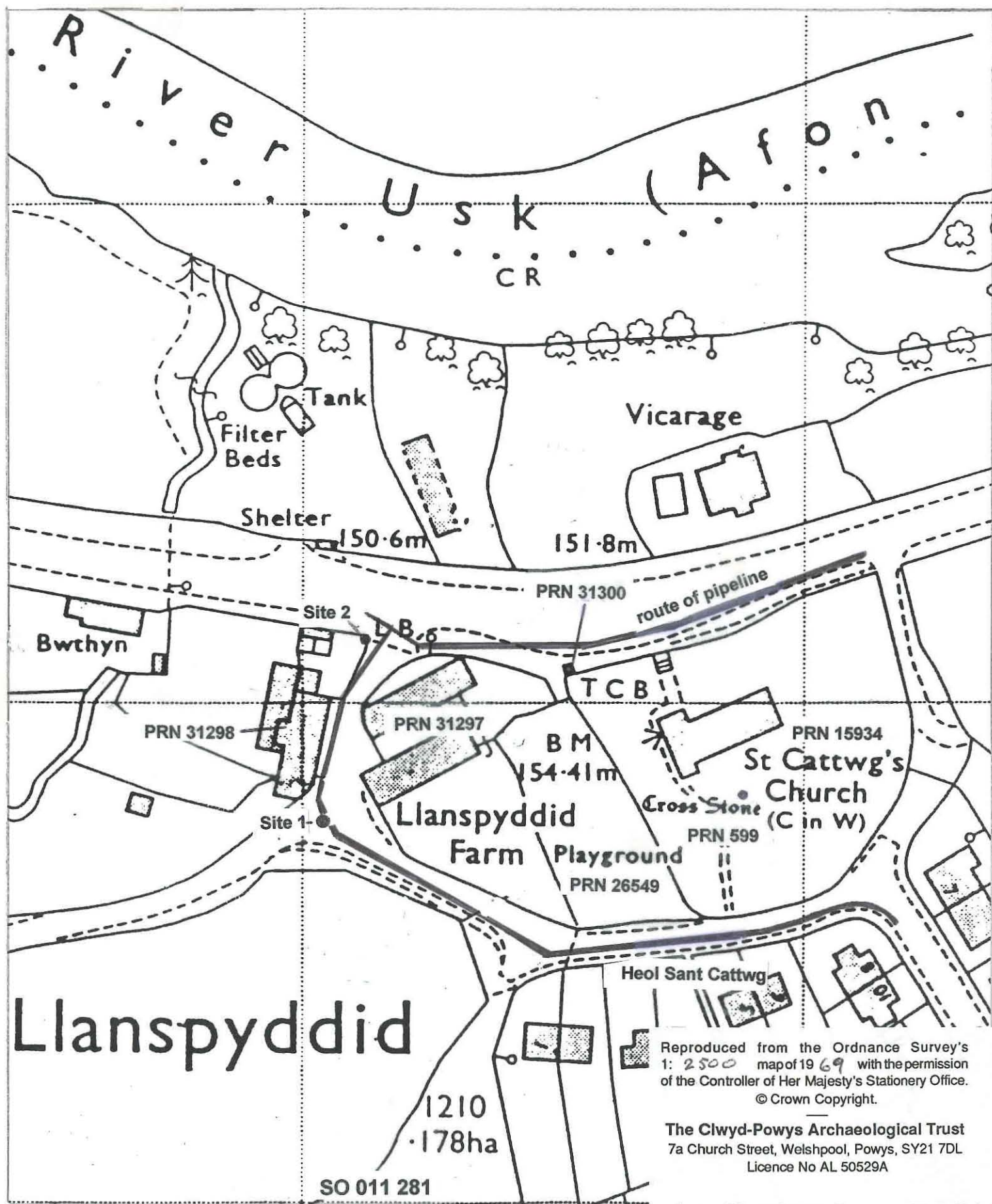


FIG. 2 ROUTE OF PIPELINE and ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

SCALE 1:1,000