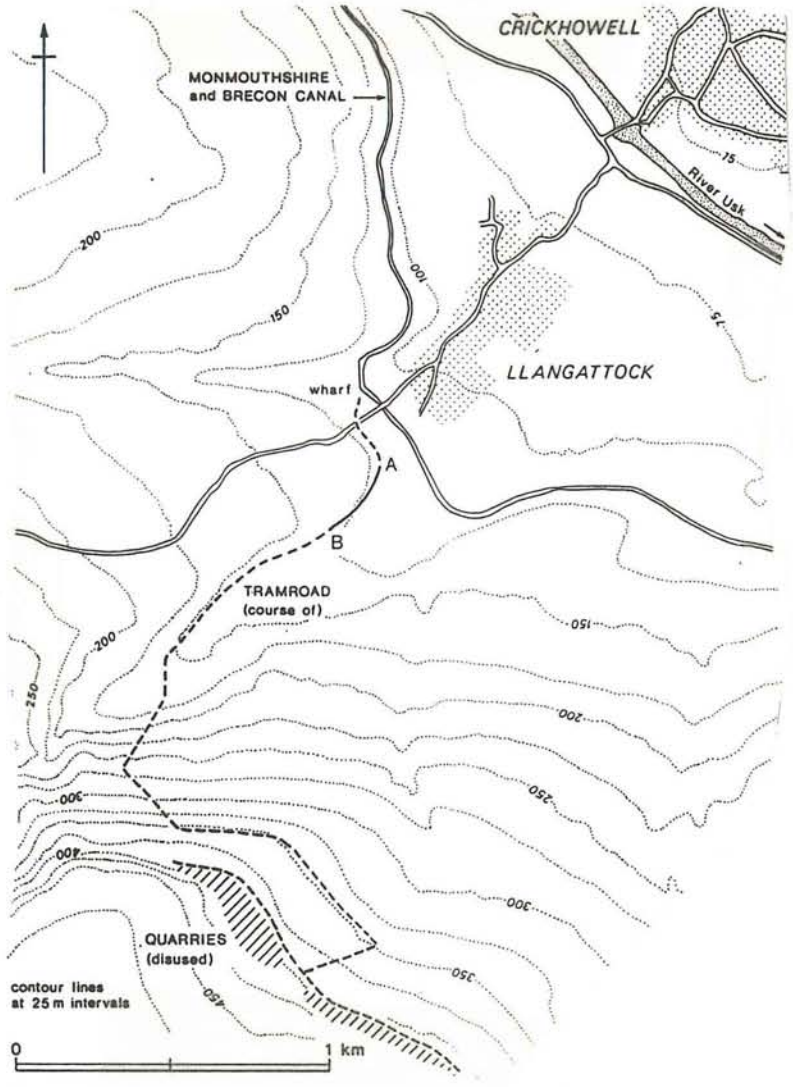
THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Darren-Cilau Tramroad, Llangattock, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SURVEY



CPAT Report No 103

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SURVEY

by A M Gibson

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Report prepared for Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL
tel (0938) 553670, fax 552179

SURVEY OF THE DARREN-CILAU TRAMROAD, LLANGATTOCK, POWYS APRIL 7-11 1994

1 Introduction

1.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) were commissioned by Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to undertake survey work on a damaged area of the early nineteenth century Darren-Cilau tramroad.

1.2 The line of the tramroad had been marked as a wayleave for the laying of a 100mm water mains pipe from the new pumping station in Llangattock to the houses on the hillside of Darren. The curatorial section of CPAT were consulted by Acer Wallace Evans on the day of the commencement of the topsoiling work. CPAT curatorial section, with the support of local inhabitants and Mr P Dorling, Archaeologist with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, stressed the importance of this archaeological monument and strongly requested that the site be preserved and that the pipeline be diverted.

1.3 Worked was halted on the pipeline work but only after two sections of the tramroad had been topsoiled and significantly damaged.

1.4 Consequently the contracts section of CPAT were commissioned to survey the damaged sections of tramroad prior to the relandscaping of the area.

1.5 The resulting survey forms the basis of this report.

2 The Tramroad

2.1 The tramroad was constructed in 1816 by the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal Co. to carry limestone from the Darren Cilau limestone quarries at SO 20251570 to the limekilns at the canal at Llangattock at SO20651727.

2.2 The tramroad is well-preserved at the top of an artificial embankment which can be traced from the limekilns at the canal side at Llangattock through fields to the SW and along the public footpath. From here, the tramroad diverts to the S at SO20001645 and runs up to the quarries via a steeply pitched incline. Some dressed stone sleeper blocks are visible along the whole of the course of the tramroad.

2.3 Passing loops are also present on the tramroad. One such loop at SO20251690 was seriously damaged by the present construction works.

3 The Survey

3.1 The survey was carried out by Dr A. M. Gibson and Mr. B. Hart of CPAT on the three days of April 7, 8 and 11, 1994 and was undertaken using a total station EDM survey system. In addition a black and white and colour slide photographic record of the surviving remains, groundworks and ground damage was made.

4 The Results of the Survey (fig.1)

4.1 Topsoiling of the wayleave at the north of the affected area had seriously damaged the surviving remains. Displaced sleeper stones were noted in the spoilheaps and towards the edges of the trench. All that remained of the tramroad itself in this area was an irregular linear patch of limestone ballast.

4.2 The passing loop was originally noted by Mr M Walters (CPAT Curatorial section) at an on-site meeting on commencement of the topsoil stripping. This loop was located near the centre of the survey area but was obscured during the survey by a considerable area of vehicle damage such as ground churning and deep wheel ruts.

4.3 *In situ* sleeper blocks were visible in the southern section of the survey and running into the severely damaged area described above. These dressed sandstone blocks, each with a central hole, originally carried the rails of the tramroad. These rails were fixed to the sleeper stones by means of an iron peg driven into an oak dowel fitted into the perforation in the stone. Some iron pegs were noted *in situ*.

4.4 The tramroad had been much less damaged in this southern section. The distances between the *in situ* stones indicate a guage of 1.2m (4ft).

4.5 A watching brief on works affecting the tramroad has been delayed as a result of difficulties encountered in land procuration associated with the re-routing of the pipeline. This will be undertaken in due course.

5 ARCHIVE

5.1 The following archive material resulting from the survey is housed at CPAT offices.

Survey Data
Black and White negatives (36)
Black and white prints
Colour slides (24)
Correspondence file

6 Further reading

Hughes, S. 1990 *The Brecon Forest Tramroads. The Archaeology of an Early Railway System.* Aberystwyth: RCAHMW

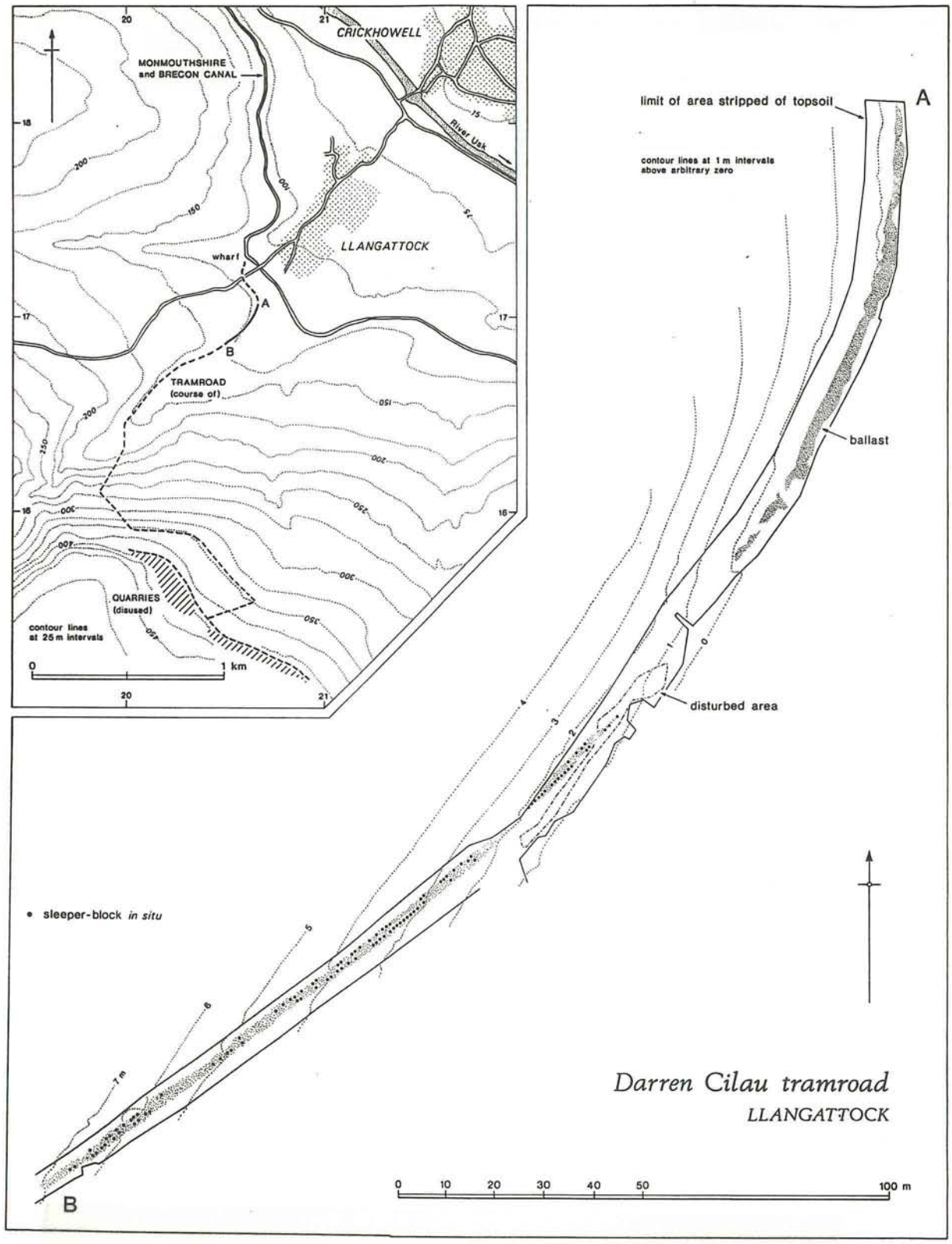

Fig 1: Location of the Darren-Cilau Tramroad and survey of the afected areas. Drawing by Brian Williams

The Darren Cilau Tramroad: A Watching Brief

1 Introduction

1.1 Following consultations between Welsh Water, Acer Wallace Evans and the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), the course of the new water main which formed part of the Crickhowell Springs Abandonment scheme was adjusted in order to minimise any resultant damage to the course of the early 19th-century Darren Cilau Tramroad, which ran between the Darren Cilau quarries and the canal at Llangattock.

1.2 Some disturbance of the tramroad had occurred before the consultations noted above had taken place and this is dealt with in the previous CPAT report (Gibson 1994). After consultation, one section of the tramroad was deemed to be unavoidable by the mains laying activities and the results of the watching brief maintained while the work was being undertaken are contained in this report.

2 Location and Land-Use (see fig 1)

2.1 The affected section of tramroad is located immediately to the north-west of Cwm house (SO 2008 1650), which is approximately 1.2 km to the south-west of Llangattock. A total length of approximately 100m adjacent to the house was disturbed by the pipeline trenching work.

2.2 The course of the tramroad is designated as a public footpath in this locality. Apart from a few visible sleeper blocks it is otherwise grassed over and presumably used as grazing land.

3 Methodology

3.1 The watching brief was carried out throughout the excavation of the pipe trench along the course of the tramroad. Any features of its construction which became visible were photographed and measured, but no detailed plans were produced due to the lack of time available for recording as the pipeline work progressed.

4 Results of the Watching Brief

4.1 Pipeline laying commenced at the south-western end of the affected area. At this point the foundations for the tramroad were seen to consist of a 0.40m thick layer of angular hardcore, in which the sleeper blocks were set.

4.2 As work progressed in a north-easterly direction, it became apparent that sleeper blocks were being disturbed by the trenching operations. Unfortunately there was no possibility of avoiding this disturbance, the narrow working corridor between the garden wall of Cwm house and the retaining wall at the opposite side of the tramroad precluded any adjustment in the line of the pipe trench.

4.3 Some of the sleeper blocks still contained the iron pegs used to retain the rails in position. One stone showed evidence of an abortive attempt to drill a hole for one of the pegs; it appeared that the stone had proved too

hard for the equipment being used. This shows that the sleeper blocks were not confined to being dressed sandstone and that other stone was apparently considered acceptable.

4.4.1 At the north-eastern end of the affected area, the pipe trench changed direction to the east, revealing as it did so a layer, 0.70m in thickness, of medium sized (<0.3m diameter) rounded stones. This was sealed by a 0.15m thick layer of re-deposited orange-brown soil on which the hardcore foundation for the tramroad was laid. The hardcore was seen to be 0.30m thick at this point.

4.4.2 The layer of rounded stones may well have originated in the nearby stream and were used in the construction of the embankment which carries the tramroad as it traverses the lower part of the hillside which slopes down from the north-west.

5 Conclusions

5.1 This section of the pipeline trenching works has inevitably damaged the tramroad structure to some extent. In the main it would appear that this damage is confined to one line of sleeper blocks and the associated hardcore.

5.2 The available time was too short to clean and record the trench section. It is therefore difficult to determine whether any features other than those described in section 4 (above) were present.

6 References

Gibson A.M. 1994 Darren Cilau Tramroad, Llangattock, Powys. CPAT Report No 103. Welshpool.

Hughes S. 1990 The Brecon Forest Tramroads. RCAHMW. Aberystwyth.

R. Hankinson

19 August 1994

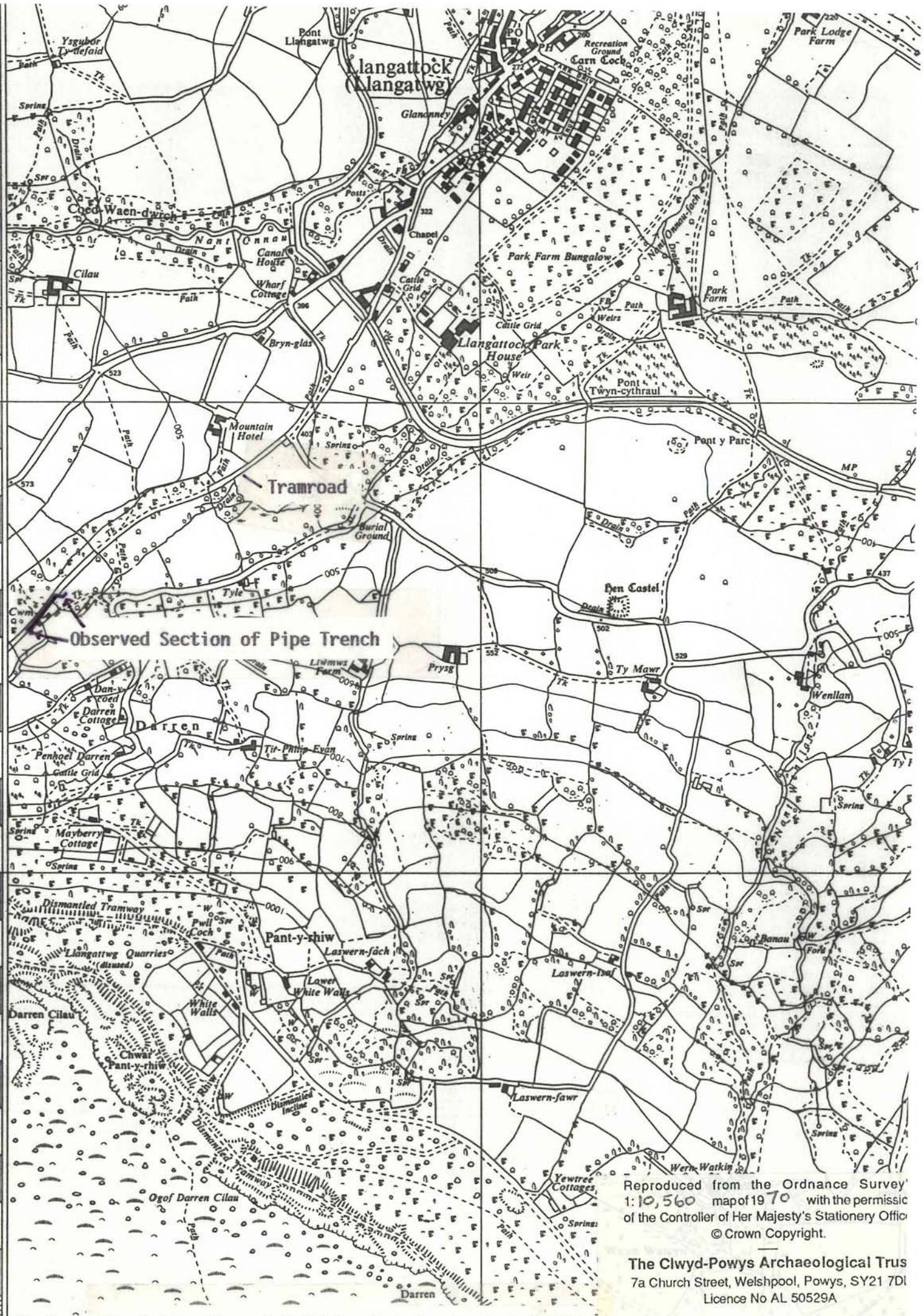

Fig 1 Location of Watching Brief Scale 1:10000

10 Metres

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