

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Acre Lane Argae, Crew Green, Powys:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

CPAT Report No 250

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Report for Dean & Dyball Construction Ltd

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CPAT Report Record

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 11th June 1997, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) were invited by Eachus Huckson of Kidderminster to submit a specification and costing for a photographic survey of and watching brief on archaeological features affected by improvement works to the flood defences at Acre Lane, Crew Green, Powys (SJ 31401585).
- 1.2 A costing and specification were submitted on 12th June 1997 and were subsequently accepted by Eachus Huckson. This specification forms Appendix 1 of this report. An order (No.9017.23.05) was subsequently received from Dean & Dyball Costruction in respect of these works on 7th July 1997.
- 1.3 The works comprised a scheme of argae bank improvement and culvert/outfall repair.
- 1.4 Following an archaeological assessment report by Earthworks Archaeological Services (Report E49, June 1995) in which a number of archaeological sites were identified, the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust prepared a brief for the Environment Agency (No. WAT 219, dated 6th June 1997) against which the contractor's specification was prepared.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND LAND USE

- 2.1 The sites affected by the development are located at NGR SJ 31401585, approximately 2.5km south east of Llandrinio Bridge and 0.5km north west of Crew Green (fig 1).
- 2.2 Lying at 60m OD, the site comprises flat open pasture with some cereal cultivation in adjacent fields.
- 2.3 The site lies 1.5km west of the confluence of the Severn and Vyrnwy and is prone to seasonal flooding. The underlying soils comprise fine fractioned alluvial silts with depths of up to 4m.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The argae bank is assumed in the curatorial brief to date to 'the late eighteenth century and possibly earlier' (p2, para 4a) with some refurbishment in the 1930's or 1940's. No evidence was found in the present survey to conflict with this statement.
- 3.2 A disused railway track crosses the southern end of the affected area and is mid 19th C in date. This crosses a minor brick and stone-built outfall/culvert at SJ31485183 (Culvert A).
- 3.3 A second culvert (Culvert B) passes through the argae at SJ31481591. This is also stone and brick-built with metal sluice gates and with a concreted floor. It is probably of mid 20th C. date.

4 PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

- 4.1 In accordance with the Curatorial Brief and the appended specification, culverts A and B were photographed in 35mm Black and White and Colourslide film.
- 4.2 Particular attention was paid to the *in situ* wooden sluice gate on Culvert A (fig 2). The interior of culvert A could not be photographed as it had been lined with black plastic sheeting to prevent its colonisation by bats (figs 3 & 4).
- 4.3 The argae bank was photographed both before (figs 5 & 6) and subsequent to topsoiling (fig 7).
- 4.4 A borrow pit was excavated through the argae at SJ31481584. The alluvium was seen to be 4m deep at this point and to lie over a stiff blue-grey clay. The resulting section through the argae was photographed.
- 4.5 Culvert A was photographed in section during its removal (fig 8).

- 4.6 Culvert B was also photographed in colour slide and black and white film for record purposes (figs 9 & 10).

5 WATCHING BRIEF

- 5.1 The topsoiling and excavation on the line of the argae was visited on 14th July 1997 at which time the section through the argae at SJ31481584 was recorded photographically (fig 11).
- 5.2 The base of the flood bank was, at this point, 15m wide and it survived to 1.3m high. The bank comprised light brown alluvial silt capped by a purplish layer of coarse stone chippings. On the western (dry) side, the stoney layer was sealed by a layer of yellow-brown clay which in turn was sealed by the present turf and humus. This clay may well represent subsequent refurbishment of the flood bank. On the eastern (flood) side, alluvial silts overlay the stoney layer and were likewise sealed by the modern turf and humus.
- 5.3 There was no buried soil or turf line visible between the bank itself and the underlying alluvium. This demonstrated that the turf and humus had been removed prior to the construction of the bank and consequently there were no surviving contexts from which palaeoenvironmental data could be recovered. No dating materials were found and the base of the argae merged imperceptibly with the alluvium on which it was constructed.

LOCATION MAP FOR ACRE LANE AND ACRE BROOK OUTFALLS - SCHEME 6145

SCALE 1: 10,000

REPRODUCED FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP
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Fig 1 Location of the study area.

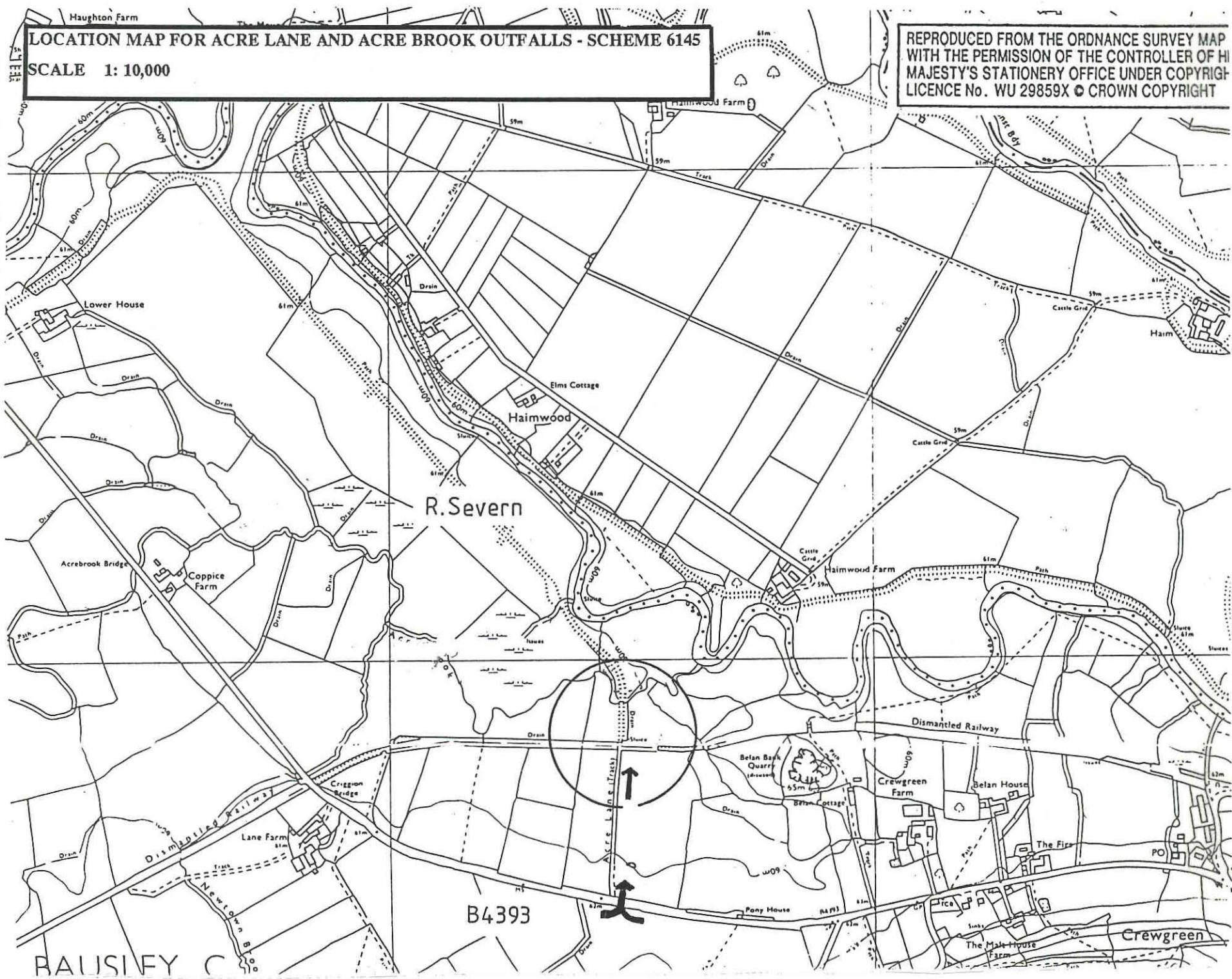




Fig 2 Composite panoramic view of the N side and sluice of Culvert A (photos 603/5-8).



Fig 3 South side of Culvert A (photo 603/25).



Fig 4 Detail of the S side of Culvert A showing polythene lining (photo 603/13).



Fig 5 Argae bank at SJ31481591 looking S prior to repair works (photo 603/29).



Fig 6 Argae bank at SJ31481591 looking N during repair works (photo 603/30).



Fig 7 Argae bank at SJ31351610 looking SE during repair works (photo 636/07).



Fig 8 Cross-section through Culvert A looking W (photo 603/34).

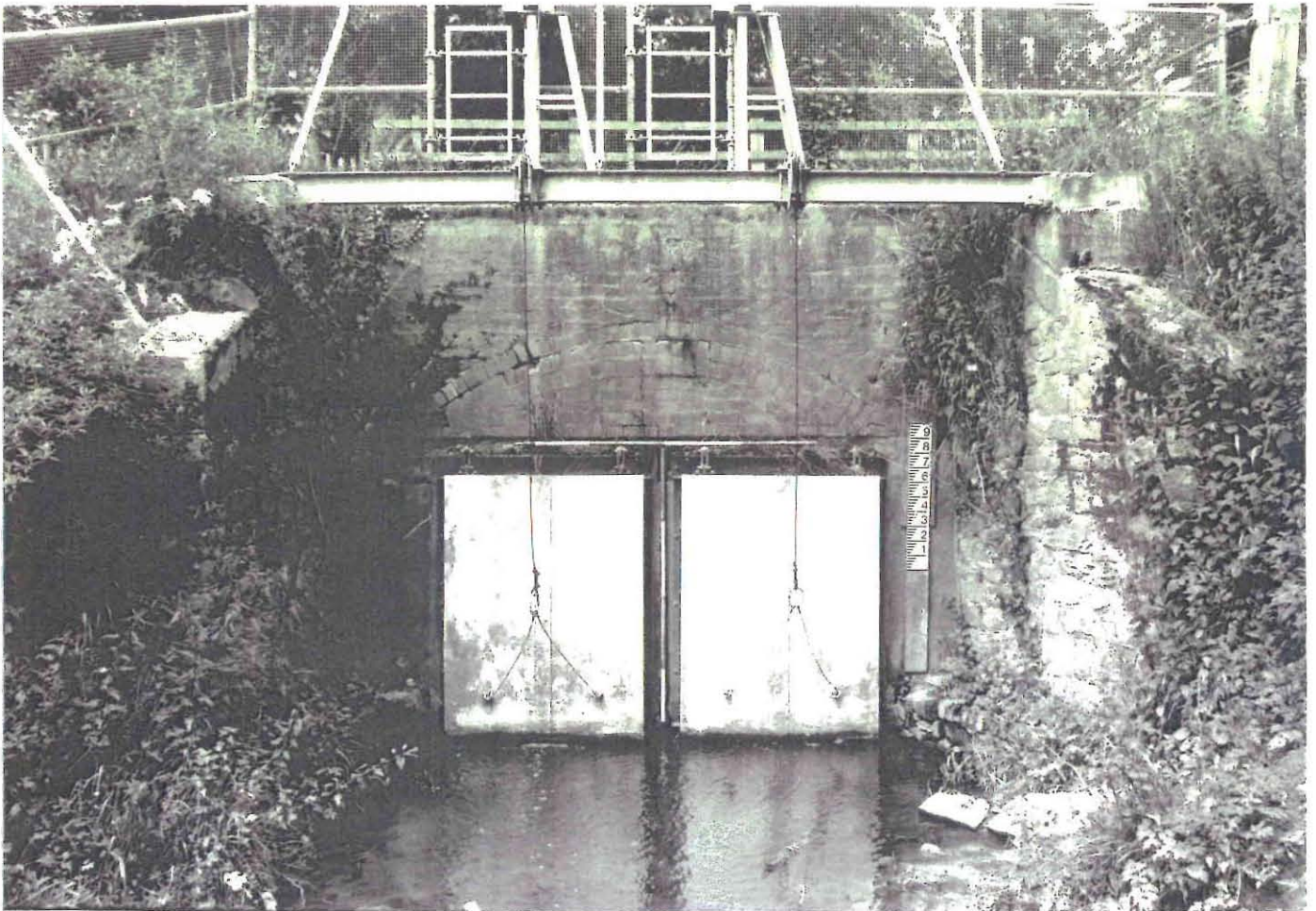


Fig 9 Culvert B, E side (photo 603/27).

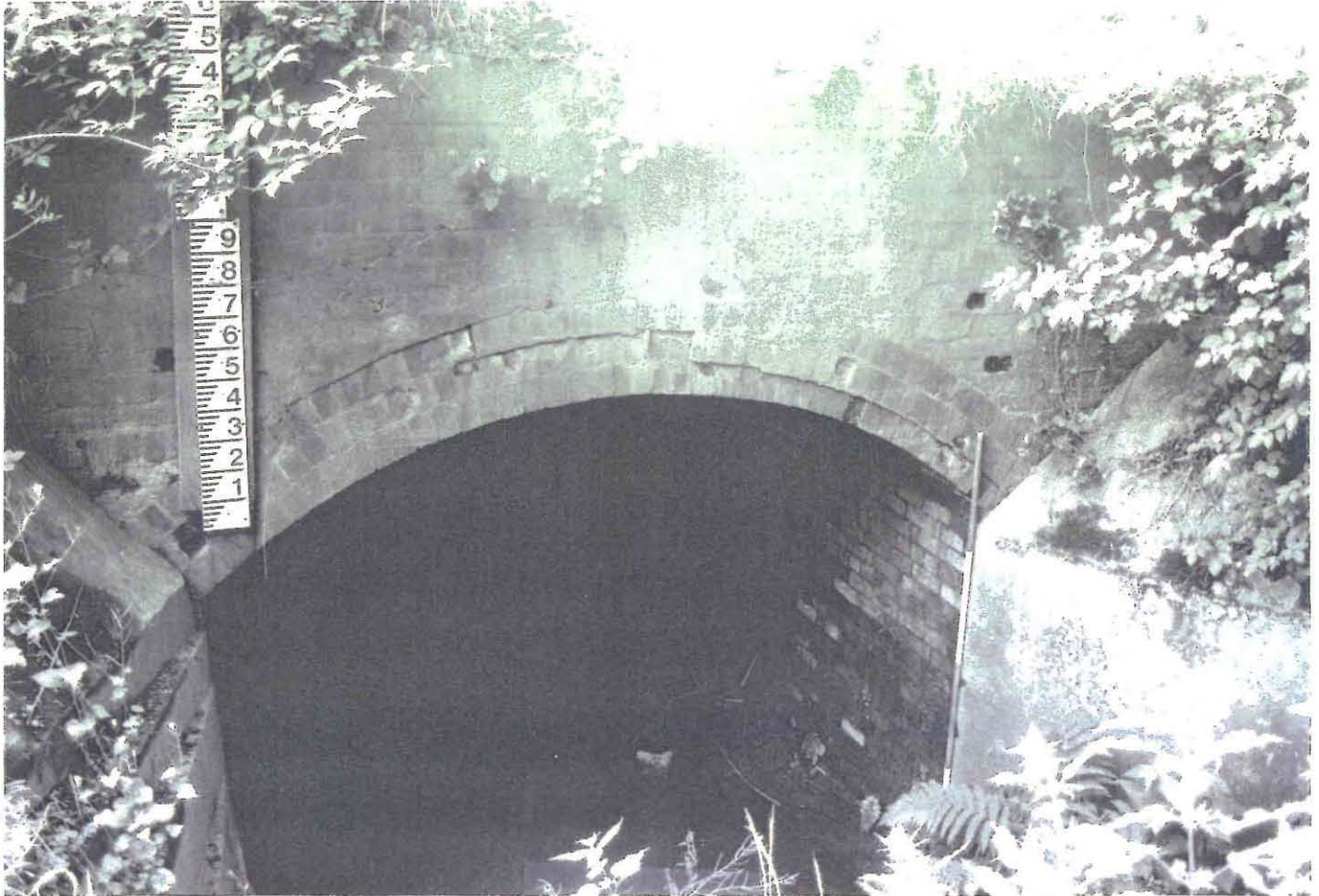


Fig 10 Culvert B, W side (photo 603/31).

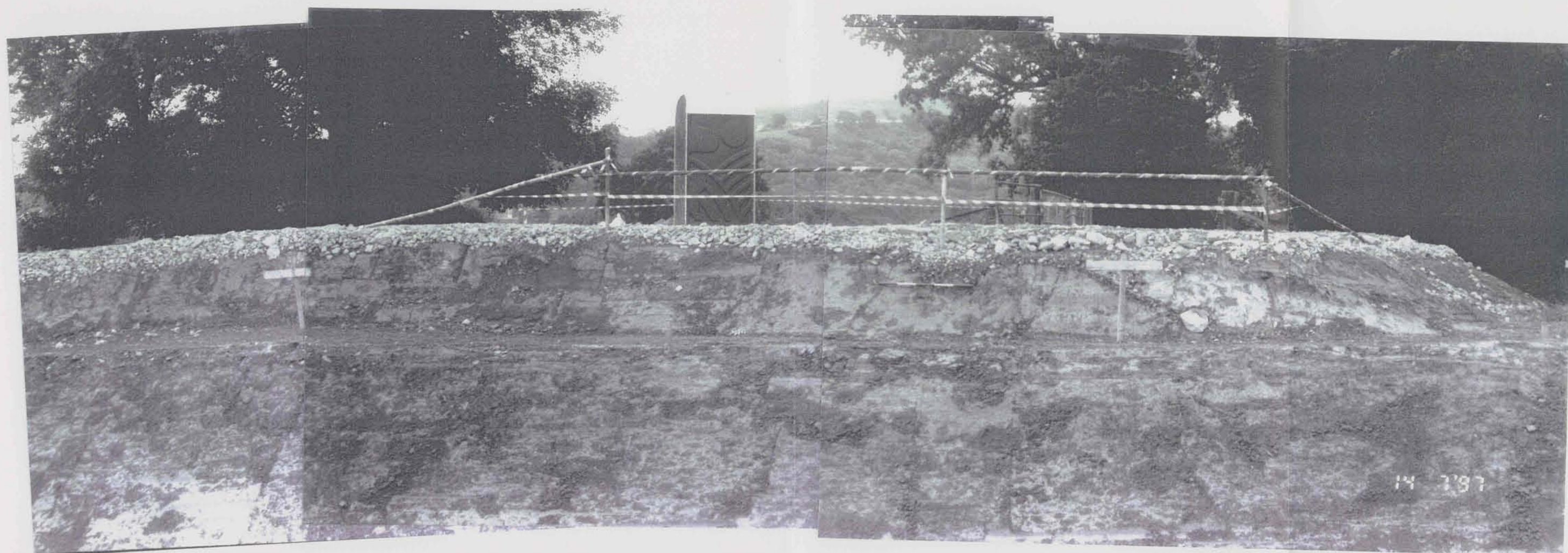


Fig 11 Composite panoramic photograph of the cross-section through argae at SJ31481591 looking S.
(photos 636/8, 10 & 11).

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST AT CREW GREEN, POWYS.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed development at Crew Green involves the repair and reconstruction to the arge bank as part of the improvement and outfall/culvert repair at Acre Lane (SO31401585).
- 1.2 This area lies 2.5km SE of Llandrino Bridge and).5km NW of Crew Green.
- 1.3 The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in their capacity as archaeological curators for the county and subsequent to a survey undertaken by *Earthworks Archaeological Services* (Report E49, 1995) 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 219, dated 6th June 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.
 - 2.1.3 to undertake a photographic survey of the arage banks and outfall/culvert using 35mm colour slide & BW film.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be carried out acording 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 more than 10 days in all 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.

Dr A.M. Gibson
Projects Manager

APPENDIX 2

PROJECT ARCHIVE

Correspondence File
Black & White prints (41)
Black & White films (2)
Colour slides (39)