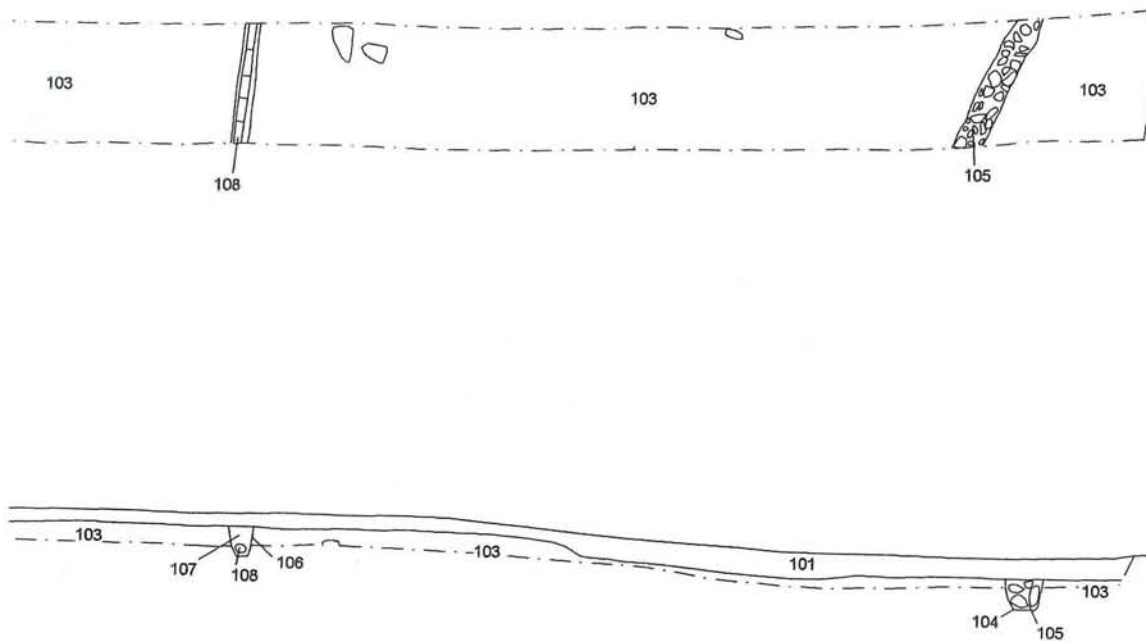


# *Caersws to Machynlleth Gas Pipeline (Phase 2 Talerddig to Machynlleth)*

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Caersws to Machynlleth Gas Pipeline  
(Phase 2 Talerddig to Machynlleth)*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

*Caersws to Machynlleth Gas Pipeline  
(Phase 2 Talerddig to Machynlleth)*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

**R.Hankinson**  
June 2000

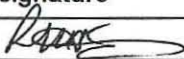


Report for RSK Environment Ltd on behalf of British Gas Transco

## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

CPAT Report Title	Caersws to Macynlleth Gas Pipeline (Phase 2 Talerddig to Machynlleth) Archaeological Evaluation		
CPAT Project Name	Talerddig - Machynlleth Gas Pipeline		
CPAT Project No	892	CPAT Report No	368
Confidential (yes/no)		draft/final	

### Internal control

	name	signature	date
prepared by	R. HANKINSON		19/06/00
checked by	R.J. SILVESTER	R. J. S. 	19/06/00
approved by	R.J. SILVESTER	R. J. S. 	19/06/00

### Revisions

no	date	made by	checked by	approved by

### Internal memo


## The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL

tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

© CPAT

## **CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>EXCAVATIONS</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>
	<b>APPENDIX 1 - SPECIFICATION</b>
	<b>APPENDIX 2 - SITE ARCHIVE</b>
	<b>FIGURES</b>
	<b>PLATES</b>



## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 22nd March 2000, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT Contracts) was asked by RSK Environment Ltd of Helsby, Cheshire, to provide a quotation for an archaeological evaluation of specific features in advance of the construction of a gas pipeline between Talerddig and Machynlleth in north-western Powys.
- 1.2 The archaeological evaluation had been requested by the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, in order to determine the nature of three features (PRNs 80283, 80292 & 80293) which had been identified during an assessment of the pipeline route in January 2000 (Silvester 2000), but whose importance could not be determined by field survey and desk-top study alone. The evaluation was the subject of a design brief prepared by the Curatorial Section (CPAT EVB 370), which specified that the sites were to be evaluated by trial trenches excavated across the full width of each site, extending 5m beyond them in both directions.
- 1.3 Following the production of the brief, and as a result of other factors, the route of the pipeline was altered. The alterations led to the avoidance of PRN 80292 by the proposed route, and this site was accordingly removed from the list of sites to be evaluated.
- 1.4 The CPAT quotation was accepted by RSK Environment Ltd in a letter of 5th May 2000. The excavations were carried out during the end of May and early June, with this report being written in June 2000.

## 2 GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The first excavation (Trench 1) was carried out on the site of the vague earthworks of PRN 80293, considered to potentially represent some form of settlement, located on the valley floor of the River Dyfi at SH 8208 0526. The remaining excavation (Trench 2) was carried out on a large bank (PRN 80283), of uncertain origin, which was located at SH 8926 0341.
- 2.2 The geographical background (soils, geology etc.) has already been considered in the initial assessment of the gas pipeline (Silvester 2000, 2) and will not be repeated here.

## 3 EXCAVATIONS

- 3.1 The methodology prescribed by the evaluation brief consisted of the excavation of a trench across each site. It was specified that the trenches were to cover the full width of a site, extending 5m beyond it on both sides, in the direction of the proposed pipeline wayleave.
- 3.2 The trenches were initially excavated by machine to the level of either the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or the natural subsoil; any subsequent excavation was carried out by manual techniques. Any features which were encountered during the excavations were sampled to determine their nature, function and date, if necessary. The numbers in brackets in the following paragraphs refer to archaeological contexts which describe the layers and features revealed by the excavations.
- 3.3 The presence of a fence within the 5m extension zone, at one end of both evaluation trenches, led to a necessary restriction in their length. Accordingly, Trench 1 has no overlap beyond the site at its south-west end, while Trench 2 only has an overlap of 3m beyond the site at its north-west end.
- 3.3 *Trench 1 (PRN 80293: SH 8208 0526) (Figs 1 & 3; Plates 1 & 2)*  
The trench described in this paragraph, measuring 27.8m x 1.7m, was entirely excavated by machine, though the sides and base were cleaned by hand to reveal the features present. The uppermost layer, 0.1m-0.3m thick, consisted of light buff-brown clay silt topsoil (1). Underlying the topsoil in the south-west part of the trench were a series of peat layers (2), (3) and (4), up to approximately 0.7m in depth; the layers included some silty material and a



reasonable quantity of wood, mostly oak, none of which was found to have been worked. The peat layers were seen to overlie a layer of light buff-brown clay silt (5), though this faded out 10m from the south-west end of the trench. A layer of deep brown sticky peat (6), immediately beneath layer (5), rested on a layer of grey silty gravel (7), which was considered to be the base of the peat deposits. The central section of the trench flooded rapidly and it proved to be difficult to relate the features in the south-west part of the trench with those in the north-east part. The peat layer (3) did continue into the north-east part of the trench, but lensed out within a layer of mottled blue-grey and buff silt (8). Underlying the silt layer at the north-east end of the trench was a slightly darker silt layer (9). The base of the north-east part of the trench was believed to be formed of a continuation of the silty gravel layer (7) encountered in the south-west part of the trench. A total of four land drainage features (10), (12), (14) and (16) were revealed in the base of the trench; these features cut all other layers except the topsoil and are considered to be of modern date.

**3.4 Trench 2 (PRN 80283: SH 8926 0341) (Figs 2 & 4; Plates 3 & 4:)**

The trench described in this paragraph, measuring 30.5m x 1.7m, was largely excavated by machine, with the sides and base being cleaned by hand to reveal the features present. The uppermost layer, 0.2m-0.35m thick, consisted of light grey-brown loamy topsoil (101), containing a small number of sherds of 18th to 19th-century glazed pottery. At the extreme north-west end of the trench the topsoil overlay a layer of orange-brown loamy soil (102), excavated by hand to a maximum depth of 0.2m, which thinned to the south-east before ending 3m from the north-west end of the trench. A layer of clean yellow-grey clay (103), with orange mottling and containing stones up to 0.5m across, was found beneath both of the layers described above and undoubtedly represents a natural subsoil deposit. The level of the subsoil was approximately 1m higher in the centre of the trench, and it would seem that PRN 80283 is therefore the result of a natural process which has resulted in the formation of a linear bank of subsoil. A total of four land drainage features (104), (106), (109) and (112) were found to be cut into the natural subsoil; presumably to improve its restricted drainage. Features (106), (109) and (112) are recent in date and contain segmental pipes, but (104) consists of a trench, 0.4m deep, with a cobbled stone fill (105) and apparently represents an earlier attempt to drain the gully to the south-east of PRN 80283.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Excavation of Trench 1 has demonstrated that the feature recorded as PRN 80293 relates to a natural depression probably caused by drainage of peat deposits in a sloping hollow adjacent to the River Dyfi. These deposits were most probably formed in an abandoned meander, to which the river is now returning. No evidence relating to enclosures or habitation was revealed, though the peat could contain evidence, in the form of pollen or wood, whose analysis may provide information relating to past conditions and land-use in the area. Examination of the locality during trenching may reveal the extent of the peat deposit; it is likely that much of the deposit will survive pipe installation work.
- 4.2 The results of the excavation of Trench 2 demonstrate that the recorded feature (PRN 80283) consists of a natural, perhaps glacial, deposit of clay and stones, giving the appearance of a bank. There appeared to be some build up of a secondary natural subsoil deposit on the north-west side of the bank.
- 4.3 Both trenches revealed that drainage works had been carried out, in an attempt to improve ground conditions for agricultural use. The drainage works in Trenches 1 and 2 appeared to be largely of recent date, though an earlier stone-lined drainage gully was present in Trench 2. However, no significant archaeological features or deposits were identified in either trench.

## **5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank his colleagues at CPAT, Mr Glyn Owen and Mr Bob Silvester for their help and assistance with the excavations.
- 5.2 The writer would also like to thank the landowners for giving their permission to carry out the work, and Richard De-Prez of A.B. Rhead & Associates Ltd for facilitating the excavations.

## **6 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Silvester, R.J., 2000, *Caersws to Machynlleth Gas Pipeline (Phase 2 Talerddig-Machylleth) Archaeological Assessment*, CPAT Report No 334: Welshpool.



## **APPENDIX 1 - SPECIFICATION**

### **SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 A new gas pipeline between Caersws and Machynlleth in northern Powys has been proposed by Transco, and the first stage of this pipeline, from Caersws to Talerddig, has now been completed. The second phase, from Talerddig to Machynlleth is now being planned. RSK Environment Ltd in their capacity as consultants to Transco have invited the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, henceforward CPAT Contracting, to submit a bid for archaeological evaluation work in advance of this second phase to assess three possible archaeological sites noted during the preliminary field assessment of the route.
- 1.2 The three sites in question are: i) a linear earthwork known as Esgair Bank; ii) a circular depression known as Cwm Gwreinyrn earthwork and iii) the Pen-y-coer earthworks. The first two lie on the north side of the Twymyn Valley, the third on the north-west side of the Dovey Valley.
- 1.3 The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust in their capacity as archaeological advisors to RSK Environment Ltd and to the local authority have determined that a field evaluation is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource at these three locations. Accordingly a brief (No EVB 370, dated 08 March 2000) has been prepared by Mr M J Walters which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

#### **2 Objectives**

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
  - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of carefully sited evaluation trenches, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology at the three locations where the proposed pipeline impacts on the features identified during the field assessment, in so far as these aims are possible within the limits of the resources available;
  - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in these evaluation trenches;
  - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the field evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource at the three locations for a reasonable decision to be taken by RSK Environment Ltd and Transco in consultation with the Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust as to whether the proposed course of the pipeline should be maintained or whether it should be re-routed.
  - 2.1.4 to identify and if appropriate recommend options for the management of the archaeological resource.

#### **3 Methods**

- 3.1 Stage one of the evaluation will take the form of three trenches, the first two, at Esgair Bank and Cwm Gwreinyrn earthwork being 2m wide and up to 30m long, the third at Pen-y-coer being 2m wide but of uncertain length, this being dependent on further ground observation before and during machining operations. Where required the trenches will be taken to a

maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface. Consultation with the client and the curator will be necessary before this depth is exceeded.

- 3.2 Each trench will be fenced off where necessary, in order to avoid ingress by stock. Turf will be stripped by hand.
- 3.3 The evaluation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:
  - 3.3.1 removal of modern overburden by machine;
  - 3.3.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits, where necessary by hand trowelling, to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate to fulfill the requirements of the evaluation and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.
  - 3.3.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT Contracting. All significant contexts planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Curatorial Brief), and photographed in 35mm format monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps.
  - 3.3.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to the appropriate local or regional museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.
- 3.4 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Curatorial Brief (section 7). This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections for each of the evaluations on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Excavation; 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 evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of two or three skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Mr R J Silvester, the Head of Field Services at CPAT, who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who supervised the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the assessment and evaluation will take no more than 15 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 written instructions from RSK Environment Ltd, and appropriate access arrangements being agreed with landowners. 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.  
R J Silvester

13 March 2000

## APPENDIX 2 - SITE ARCHIVE

### Site Records

#### *Trench 1*

17 Context record forms

1 A1 plan and section drawing

#### *Trench 2*

14 Context record forms

1 A1 plan and section drawing

1 Black and white print film

1 Colour slide film

1 Colour print film

Photographic catalogue

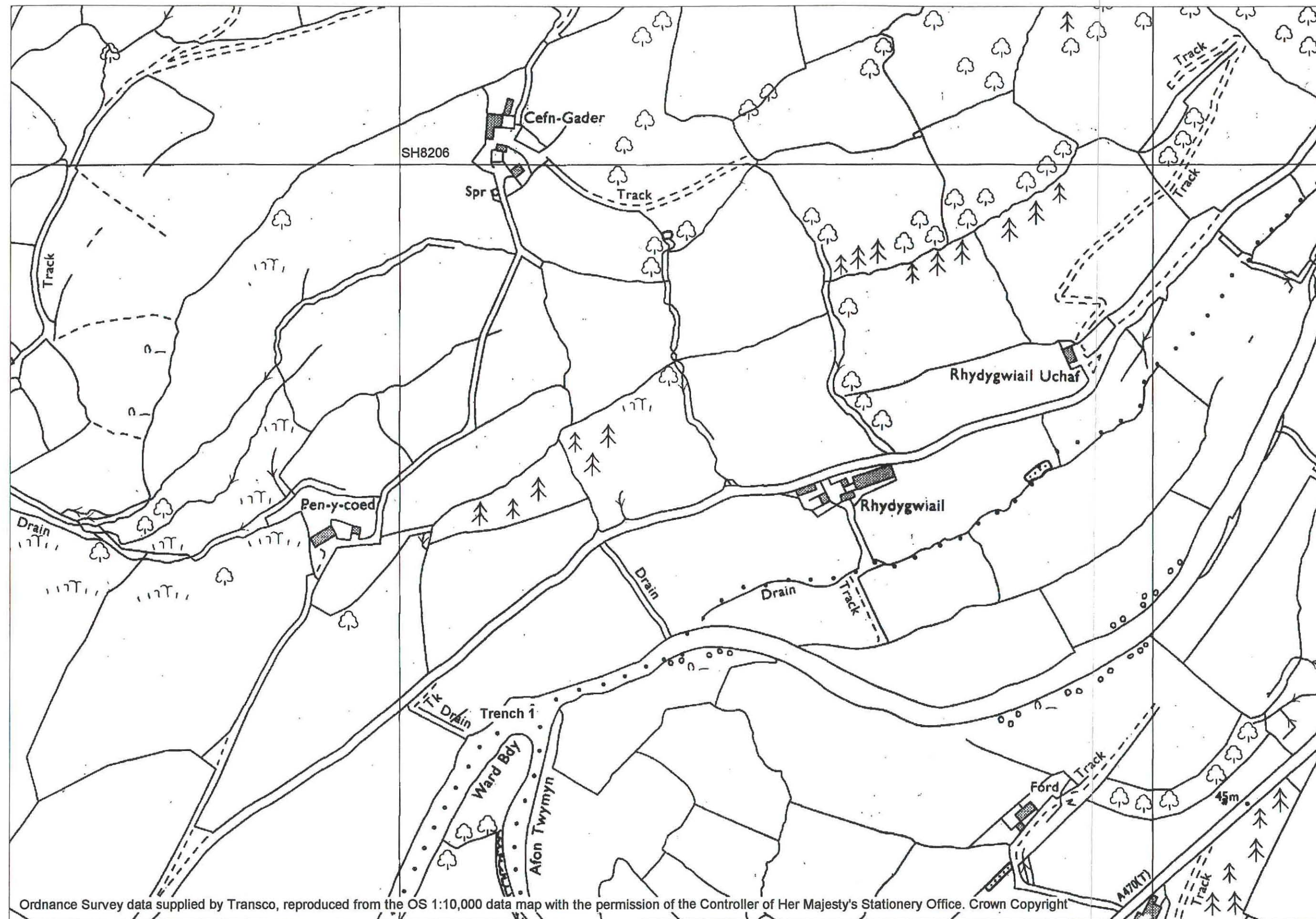
### Finds

#### *Trench 2*

Context 1 (topsoil)

3 sherds of 18th to 19th-century glazed pottery

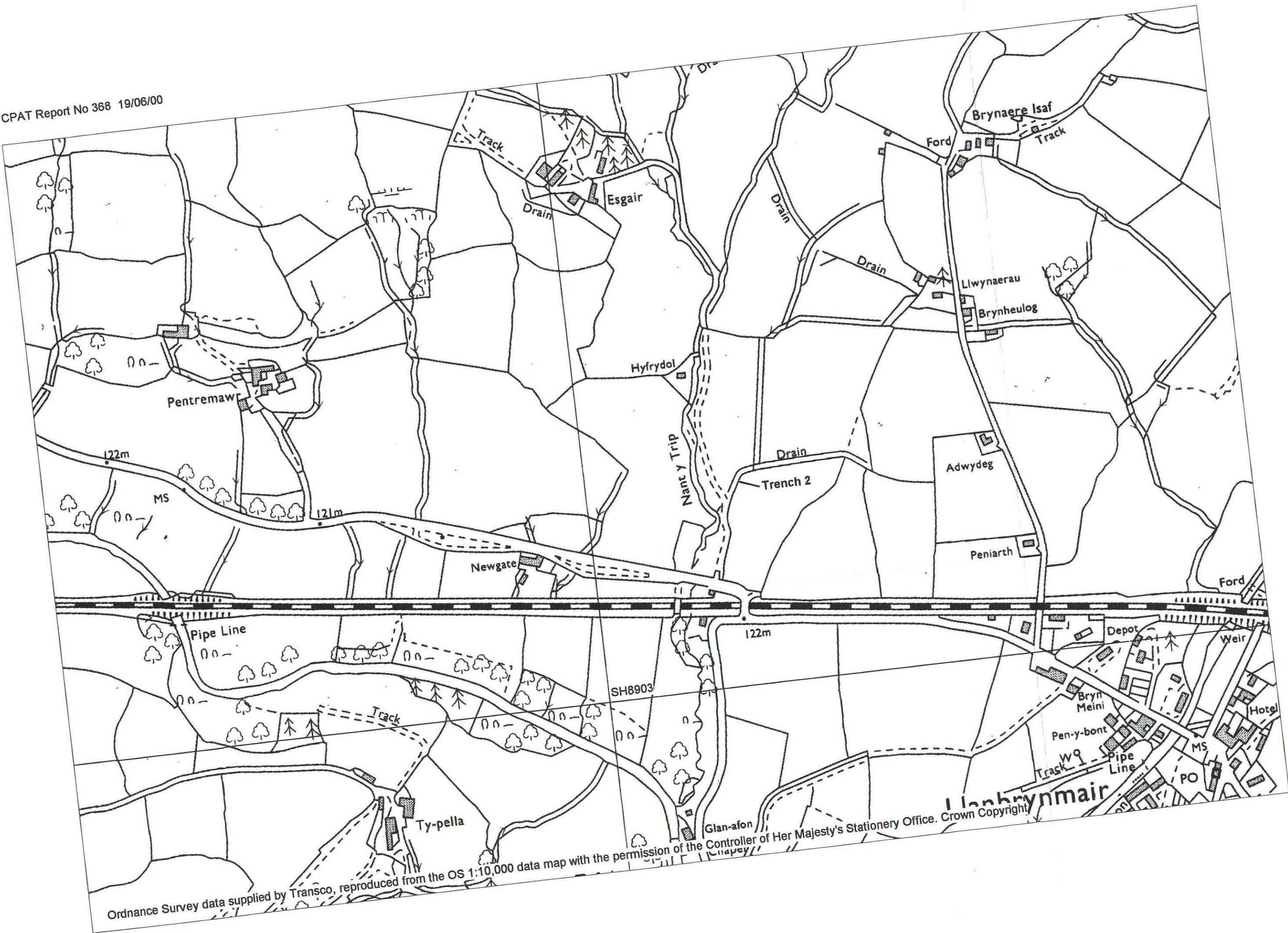




Ordnance Survey data supplied by Transco, reproduced from the OS 1:10,000 data map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown Copyright

Fig. 1 Trench 1 Location. Scale 1:5,000





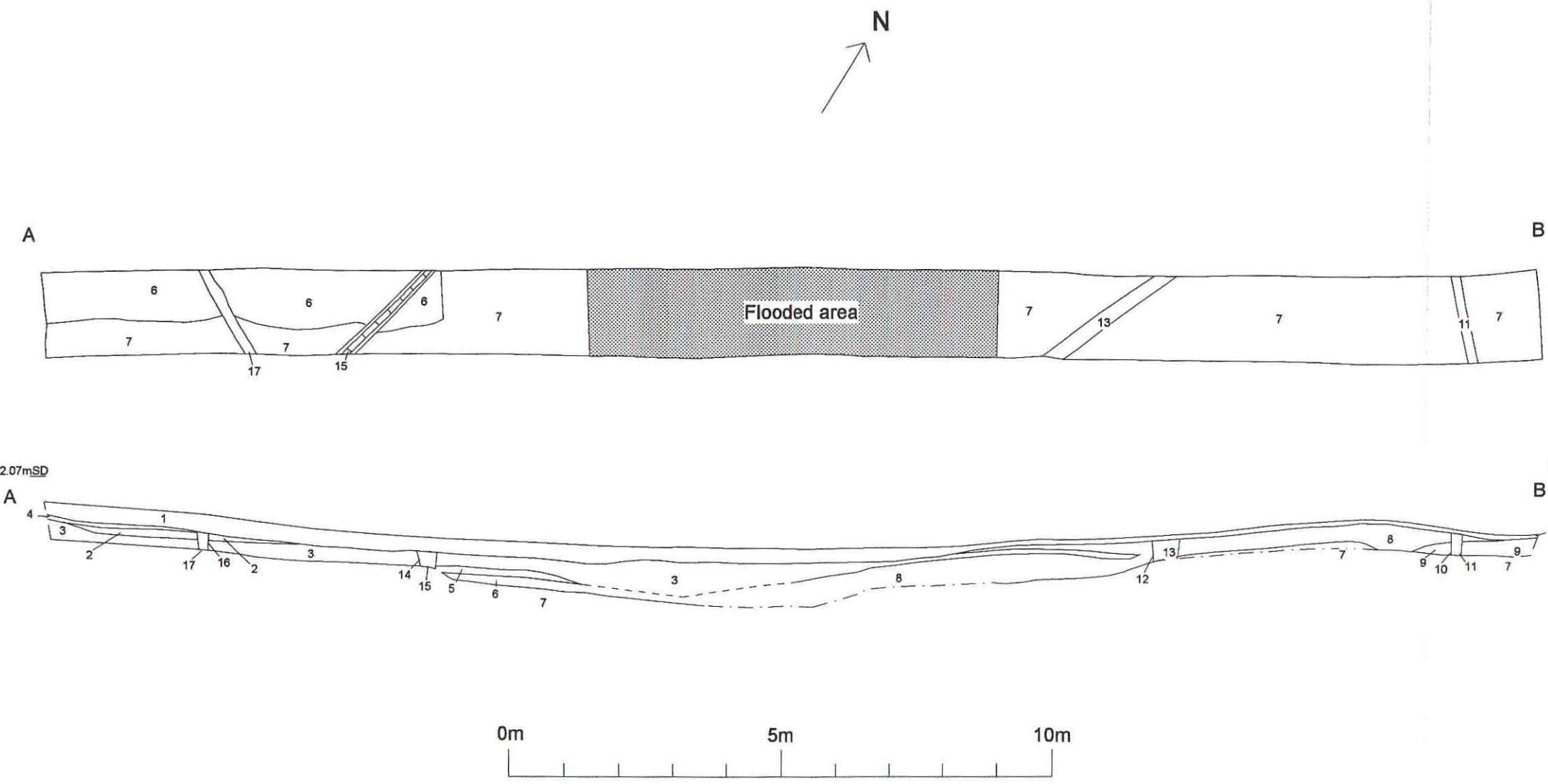


Fig 3 Trench 1, Plan and Section. Scale 1:100



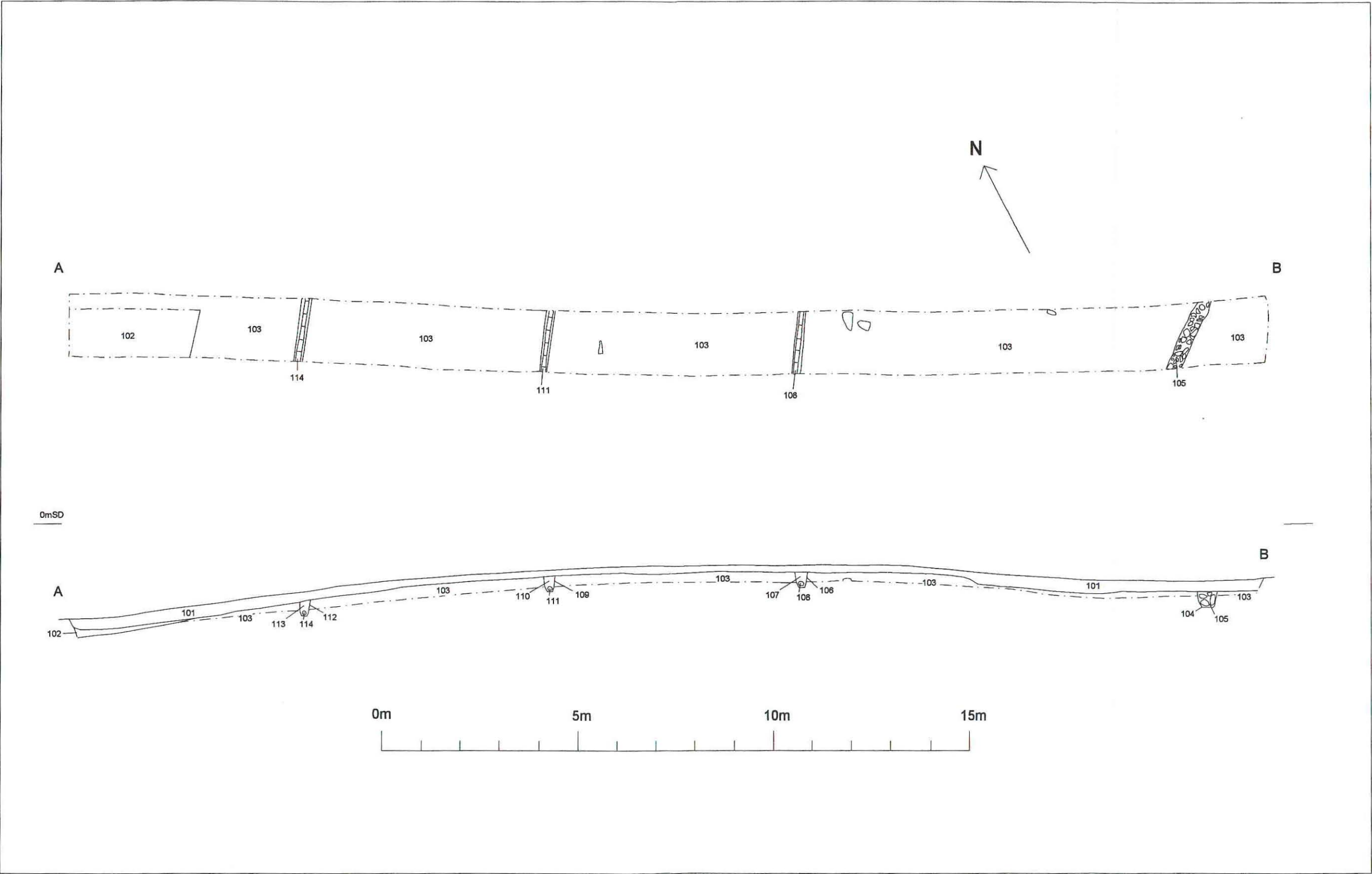


Fig 4 Trench 2, Plan and Section. Scale 1:100





Egryn Bowk  
Llanbrynmair







Plate 1. Trench 1 from SW



Plate 2. Trench 1 from NE





Plate 3. Trench 2 from NW



Plate 4. Trench 2 from SE