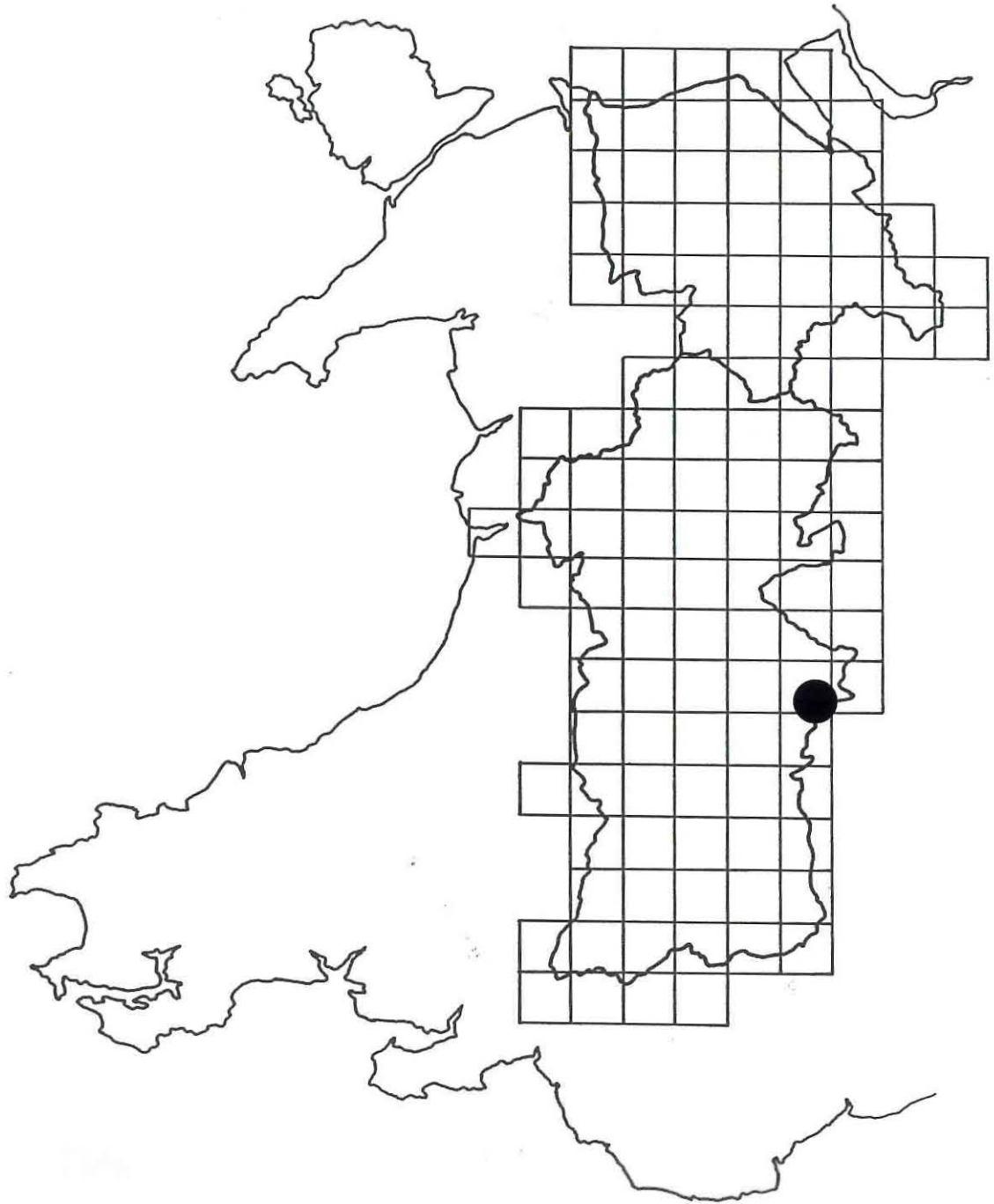


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Ditch Hill Bridge, Walton, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE LINE OF OFFA'S DYKE



CPAT Report No 56

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by **N W Jones**
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Report prepared for Powys County Council
Policy & Support Services Division

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following archaeological investigation was carried out in response to the construction of a new road bridge and the realignment of the Knobley Brook (Powys County Council planning reference R.363/A), which was likely to affect features associated with Offa's Dyke (SO 2796 6095).
- 1.2 The Dyke is visible as an upstanding earthwork to the south of the road, and is protected there as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM R25). In the area of the investigation, the Dyke does not survive as an earthwork, and its precise alignment is unknown. However, archaeological features and deposits associated with the Dyke may be preserved beneath the surface and would therefore be affected by the road scheme.

2 THE EVALUATION

- 2.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned to undertake the investigation, which was carried out on March 17th 1993. In accordance with the evaluation brief (CPAT EVB 28), the field investigation was composed of three phases; (1) an initial evaluation, followed by; (2) excavation of features revealed; and (3) a watching brief conducted during construction work. Phases 1 and 2 have been completed, and Phase 3 awaits the commencement of the development.
- 2.2 A single trial trench was excavated to determine whether archaeological deposits were present beneath the topsoil (Fig 1). The topsoil was removed by machine and the trench subsequently cleaned and excavated by hand. A full drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout the investigation. The results from the excavations were as follows:
- 2.3 **Trench A (35 x 1.5m)**
- 2.3.1 Up to c.0.40m of ploughsoil was removed by machine, revealing the natural subsoil consisting of river gravels and silts. The upper 0.15m of subsoil was also removed by machine. Subsequent cleaning of the site by hand revealed no features of archaeological significance.
- 2.3.2 The only feature worth of investigation was a narrow, irregular gully. Excavation of the silty fill revealed what may best be described as a palaeo-channel.
- 2.3.3 The only artefact recovered from the excavation was a small unworked flint flake from the ploughsoil.

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The results from the evaluation would suggest that either Offa's Dyke was discontinuous at this point, or that it follows a different alignment, probably slightly further to the west. The latter would seem the more likely possibility and indeed the local farmer claims to have identified the Dyke in this position when ploughing.
- 3.2 If the position of the Dyke is assumed to be to the west of Trench A, between it and the present road, then the proposed road realignment may well disturb deposits of archaeological significance.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The likely position of the Dyke outlined in 3.2 above should necessitate further archaeological work being undertaken when development begins. A watching brief at this stage of work has already been agreed as part of the archaeological response. It will be of particular importance to ensure an archaeological presence during topsoil stripping in order to adequately record any significant features revealed.
- 4.2 A further archaeological presence may be required during subsequent ground disturbance.

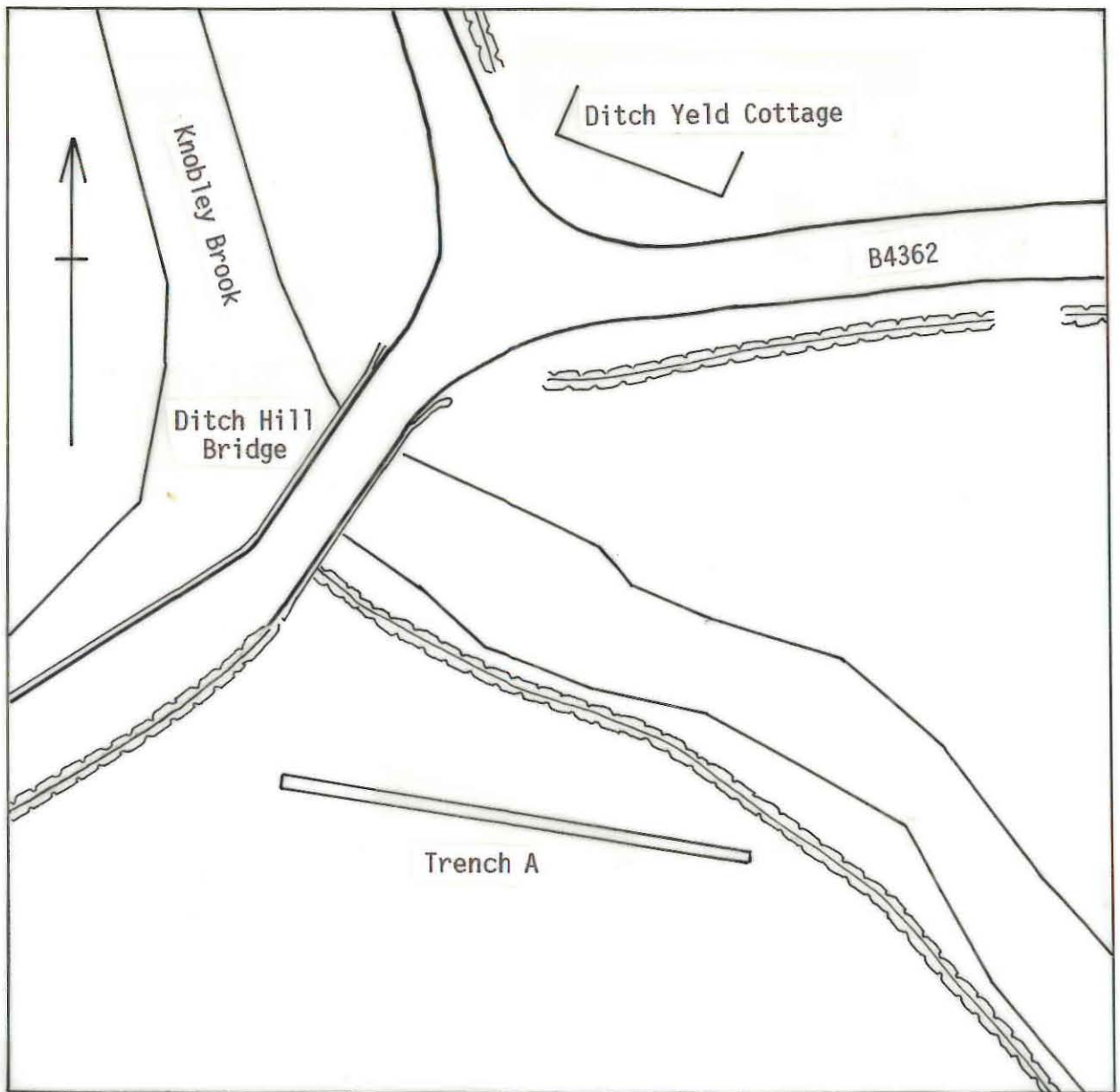


Fig 1: Location, scale 1:500