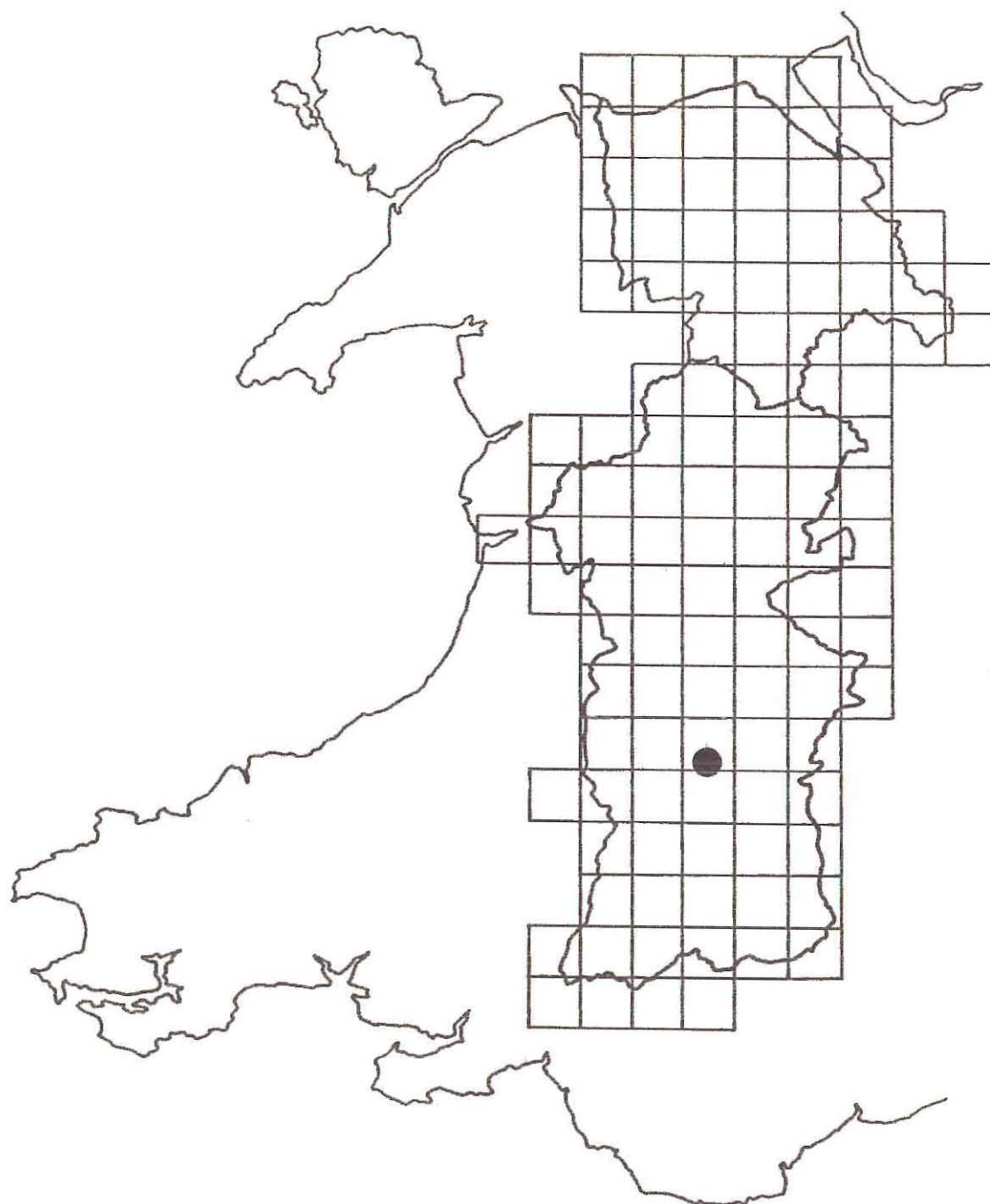


*Former Quarry, Llanelwedd, Powys*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

by **W G Owen**

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Report prepared for Rendel Palmer and Tritton

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## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was commissioned in April 1994 by Rendel Palmer & Tritton, Development & Engineering Consultants of Newport, Gwent, to carry out an archaeological evaluation of a former quarry at Llanelwedd, Builth Wells, Powys. This was recommended by Radnorshire District Council's archaeological adviser, the Curatorial Section of CPAT, as part of the outline planning application for a proposed industrial complex on the site (Radnorshire District Council Planning Application R4372/A).

1.2 The desk-top research and field survey stipulated in the brief prepared by the Archaeological Curator (CPAT EVB 33) and outlined in the specification (see Annex 1) was carried out in early May and the report prepared immediately afterwards.

## **2 Location and Land Use (Fig 2)**

2.1 The proposed development area (centred at SO 055 518), is located approximately one kilometre east of the village of Llanelwedd and occupies some 6.0 ha of the lower northern slopes of the Wye valley. The site is bounded to the north by the A481 road and to the south by a dismantled railway. The western half of this area is currently used for the stockpiling of quarried stone whilst the eastern half consists of grassed over quarry waste presumably largely derived from the disused quarry to the north-east of the area (SO 0565 5200).

## **3 Methods of Assessment**

3.1 The desk-top research comprised a search of all easily accessible primary and secondary records relating to the site and its environs. This included a consultation of the Powys Sites and Monuments Record and the examination of available cartographic and documentary sources lodged at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

3.2 The field survey was carried out during the first week of May 1994 and involved a detailed examination of all visible features located within the proposed development area. All recognisable features were measured, photographed, recorded and located cartographically.

## **4 The Desk-top Assessment**

4.1 The earliest available large-scale maps of the area are the Tithe maps for the parishes of Llanelwedd and Llanfaredde dated to 1842 and 1843 respectively. These indicated that the land, which was owned by Marmaduke David Gwynne and occupied by James Davies of Gellycadwgan, was in agricultural use and consisted of two fields. The map also shows that the quarry to the north-east of the area had not, at that time, been opened.

4.2 Both the 1889 and the 1904 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Sheets again show the area comprising open fields with a small area of woodland close to the north-eastern corner of the development area. Field boundaries depicted on these maps are still recognisable today. There were no buildings within the area. The quarry to the north-east was, in 1889, a mere 140 square yards in extent indicating that it had probably been in operation for only a short time. By



1904, however, it had doubled in size and a second quarry had been opened adjacent to the north-western corner of the development area.

4.3 The Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition 1:2500 sheet (revised 1963) shows the north-eastern quarry as much extended whilst that to the north west had not been developed much further. Three buildings are shown at the eastern end of the site and an incline crossed the area from north to south terminating at a mineral railway.

4.4 Interrogation of the Powys Sites and Monuments Record revealed that no archaeological sites had previously been recorded within the area.

## 5 The Field Survey Fig 2)

5.1 Twelve sites, all associated with quarrying, were identified within the development area. These are summarised sequentially below. The other buildings that are depicted on Fig 2 are no longer visible.

01 Approximately 130m length of a disused mineral railway. This is double-tracked with many sleepers still in situ and is aligned approximately north-west/south-east. At its north-western end it is truncated by quarry waste. A wooden gate, probably original, crosses it at a point near its south-eastern end, some 20m before its junction with the dismantled railway bordering the area. A short siding area may have been located to the south of the track about 20m to the west of the gate.

02 A cast-iron, railway-points changing lever dated 1917 and manufactured by Summerson & Sons, Darlington. This may be contemporary with the date of construction of the mineral railway.

03 A building, 8.0m x 8.0m, constructed of concrete blocks. Within it are three raised machine bases of concrete construction, an inspection pit and a moving gantry crane located at eaves level. This was probably a machine maintenance building.

04 A 10.0m x 5.0m concrete base with 6 substantial concrete support beams built upon it. Immediately to the east of this is a rectangular concrete base with three curved concrete support beams on it. This appears to be the supporting base for a large cylindrical storage tank.

05 A single-seater latrine built in concrete. Graffiti on the inner walls indicates its use in 1948.

06 A rectangular building, 14.0m x 7.0m, constructed of H-girder frame and roof trusses supported by concrete-block wall and clad with asbestos sheets. One inspection pit is visible within. Probably a machine maintenance building.

07 A rectangular building, 10.0m x 6.0m, of concrete block and wood beam construction. Four large windows on north and south walls. Walls clad in galvanised iron sheets over original wooden lath and plank walls. Electricity (Factories Act) Special Regulations 1908 and 1944 and Electricity (Factories Act) 1937 and 1948 notices indicates that the building was in use in 1948. This was possibly a machine shop.

08 A rectangular building, 10.0m x 8.0m, of wooden post and galvanised iron sheet construction and open on south side. A single inspection pit is sunk into the concrete floor. A probable machine maintenance shed formerly,



but currently used for quarried stone storage.

09 A substantial rectangular concrete base with machine base at east end. Possibly a crusher base.

10 A 2.5m square structure constructed of concrete coping stones and blocks. Door in south wall and open narrow window in north wall. Roofed with asbestos sheets which is not original. Graffiti indicates its use in 1948. Possibly a blast shelter.

11 Four lengths of walling of concrete and stone construction reinforced with iron rails. Maximum visible dimensions 7.0m x 0.3m. Aligned east/west with western ends of walls hidden by quarry waste. Possibly associated with position of former incline.

12 Concrete wall foundations of small building or other structure. Dimensions 3.0m x 2.0m.

## 6 Conclusions

6.1 As noted above (Par 2.1), most of the development area has been used for the tipping of quarry waste and, subsequently, for the stockpiling of quarried stone. At a point immediately to the south of the north-eastern corner of the area, there is a difference in level of approximately 10m between the present ground level and the pasture field immediately to the east. This provides an indication of the quantity of waste that has accumulated over time and the obvious impossibility of identifying sites predating the time when the area was utilised for this purpose.

6.2 The features recorded (Par.5.1 above), are all associated with quarrying and the mineral railway associated with the quarrying operations. These are of relatively recent origin. There is evidence to suggest that the mineral railway may have been established in 1917 or thereabouts and that buildings presently standing were in use in the 1940s.

6.2 Desk-top research was able to establish that the area was not used for the tipping of quarry waste and that no buildings had been erected prior to 1904 although quarrying was well-established immediately to the north. Enquiries which were made did not, however, locate other sources that may have provided details of developments on the site between that date and the present day apart from the Ordnance Survey Sheet of 1964 (Sheet SO 05 SE) which does show several buildings (including sites 03, 06, 07 and 08 above), and also an incline terminating at the mineral railway.

## 7 Sources

### 7.1 Cartographic

1817 Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing (revised 1828-30)

1842 Tithe Map and Apportionment, Llanelwedd Parish, Radnorshire

1843 Tithe Map and Apportionment, Llanfaredde Parish, Radnorshire

1889 Ordnance Survey Map, 1st Edition 1:2500 Radnorshire Sheet 32.1

1904 Ordnance Survey Map, 2nd Edition 1:2500 Radnorshire Sheet 32.1

### 7.2 Documentary

Powys County Sites and Monuments Record



## **Annex 1**

### **LAND AT LLANELWEDD, BUILTH WELLS, POWYS**

#### **SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

##### **1 Introduction**

1.1 Rendel Palmer and Tritton, acting on behalf of the Development Board for Rural Wales propose to commence engineering works in advance of converting a former quarry to land suitable for industrial development at Llanelwedd, near Builth Wells (at SO 055 517).

1.2 The local authority, Radnorshire District Council, have decided on the advice of their archaeological advisers, the curatorial section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) that an archaeological evaluation is necessary to assess the implications of the development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly a brief has been prepared by the curatorial section of CPAT (EVB 33) which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

1.3 The brief requires both a desk-top assessment and a field survey to be undertaken on the proposed development site. It is known whether any archaeology currently exists within this area.

##### **2 Objectives**

2.1 The objective of the evaluation is to gather as much information as is readily available to establish the presence and nature of archaeology in the area proposed for development. This will be presented in a report detailing the archaeological resource, in as much as this can be determined.

##### **3 Methods**

3.1 The readily available documentary resources will be examined, to include the regional Sites and Monuments Record, published and unpublished archaeological reports on the area, early cartography and any relevant aerial photography.

3.2 A rapid field survey will assess whether there are any ground remains of significance in the development area.

##### **4 Resources and Programming**

4.1 The desk-top assessment will be undertaken by an experienced archaeologist who will also be responsible for the preparation of the report. Overall supervision will be by the deputy director of CPAT who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

4.2 It is anticipated that the assessment may take up to eight days to complete and this will include the preparation of the report. The research will commence within one calendar month of CPAT receiving written confirmation of the acceptance of their tender.

R. J. Silvester  
8 March 1994



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