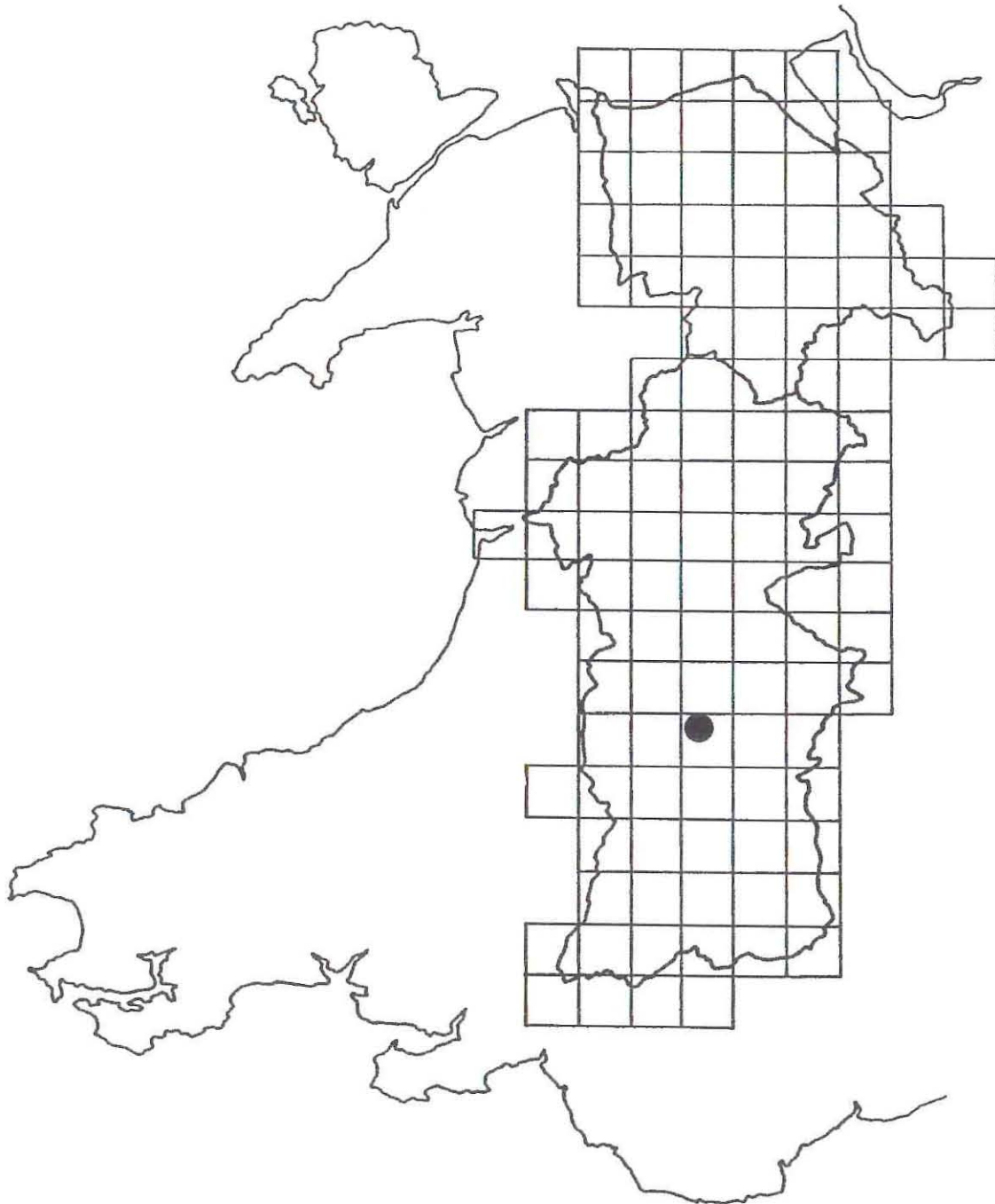


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*A470 Improvement: Cwmbach to
Newbridge-on-Wye, Powys*

WALK-OVER SURVEY



CPAT Report No 148

*A470 Improvement: Cwmbach to
Newbridge-on-Wye, Powys*
WALK-OVER SURVEY

by **W.G. Owen**
August 1995

Report prepared for Powys County Council

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

7a Church Street Welshpool Powys SY21 7DL
tel (01938) 553670, fax 552179

© CPAT 1995

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Contracting Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT) was commissioned in June 1995 by the Highways Engineering Consultancy section of the Department of Highways and Transportation of Powys County Council, to carry out the Stage 2A Walkover Survey which constitutes a part of an archaeological assessment of the Cwmbach to Newbridge-on-Wye road improvement scheme.

1.2 This archaeological assessment was requested by the Highways Engineering Consultancy section on the advice of the Curatorial Section of CPAT acting in their role as archaeological advisers to Powys County Council. The Stage 2A Walkover Survey follows on from the Stage 1 Desktop Survey carried out by CPAT (CPAT ASB Brief 134, CPAT Report No. 129) and is a rapid survey of archaeological features hitherto unreported which might be found along the routes of the possible road corridors.

2 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.1 The proposed improvement scheme extends from a point 0.6km south-east of Court Farm, Builth Road (SO 0265 5320) for a distance of approximately 7.5km in a northerly direction to a point on the A470, 0.6km north of Glan Gwy Farm, Newbridge-on Wye (SO 0130 6040) and includes seven possible alignments between these two points. Both Cwmbach Llechryd and Newbridge-on-Wye are by-passed by these corridors, two of which would involve crossing-points on the River Ithon at SO 0195 5732 or at SO 0259 5752 respectively.

2.2 The general topography of the area is undulating and varies in altitude from c. 170 to 204m OD. Land-use is predominantly agricultural apart from a few copses of natural woodland and small conifer plantations, and it is clear that cultivation has been intensive over most of the area.

3 THE WALKOVER SURVEY

3.1 The Stage 1 Desktop Survey identified 29 Cultural Heritage Sites in the general area of the possible road corridors. Of these, 10 would either possibly, or would certainly be affected by road construction works. Each of these sites was visited during Stage 2A to determine whether or not any above-ground remains were visible and also to assess their proximity to a road corridor.

3.2 Each corridor was examined along transects not exceeding 20m apart and, in addition, the ground each side of the corridor was also examined for any features of archaeological interest wherever this was possible.

3.3 Whereas the great majority of fields were either fallow or had hay crops harvested by the time of the survey, a relatively small number of fields still contained standing crops of either hay or barley. These could not be closely examined and a note of their location was made.

4 RESULTS OF THE WALK-OVER SURVEY (Fig. 1)

4.1. The sites described below are sites which would either be on the line of or lie close to proposed corridors and are listed in the order followed in the Stage 1 Desktop Survey. These are followed by new sites recorded during the course of the Walkover Survey. Sites are also classified according to categories A - F as defined in 'Archaeology and the Trunk Road Programme' (Cadw). These are defined in full below although not all are relevant to the present survey.

Category A Sites of sufficient importance to merit avoidance by any proposed development, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Historic Parks, or those that meet the criteria for scheduling or listing.

Category B Sites of regional importance which do not merit scheduling or listing but for which preservation in situ is preferred.

Category C Sites of local importance which merit adequate recording if their destruction is necessary.

Category D Sites of minor importance for which rapid recording would be sufficient, usually as part of a watching brief.

Category E Sites for which Stage 1 of their assessment was not sufficient to assess their significance. Further work would be needed if they were to be directly affected by the proposal.

Category F Those sites which have previously been noted as possible sites, but which now are thought to have little or no archaeological significance. Also those sites which have been noted but for which there is no precise location.

5 SITES IDENTIFIED DURING STAGE 1 DESKTOP STUDY

5.1 PRN 1605 (SAM No R.140) Cwrt Llechryd Earthworks (SO 0265 5320) Category A

5.1.2 A rectangular enclosure surrounded by a bank 4.0m wide and c. 1.50m high, a ditch c. 3.0m wide with a slight counterscarp bank. Proposed road corridors are shown either to cut across the north-eastern corner of this site or pass very close to it. Because this is a scheduled site of national importance, the location of a road corridor in its vicinity would greatly reduce its integrity. In addition, it is possible that archaeological remains associated with the site, but of which there are no surface traces, lie in the immediate vicinity and might therefore be affected by the proposed works. A route furthest from the site would therefore be the preferred option, although further archaeological work should be considered whichever route is adopted, but particularly in the case of any works in close proximity to the monument.

5.2 RR 623(a), (b) and (c) Possible Roman Road alignments (Centred at SO 0180 5630, SO 0205 5855 and SO 0210 5564 respectively) Category D

5.2.1 These are three possible alignments of the Roman Road from Carmarthen to Castell Collen near Llandrindod Wells. Parts of these proposed alignments passed through open fields and these locations were examined for visible traces. However, results proved to be negative in all three cases. A watching-brief during the course of road construction would be adequate as a further archaeological input as these alignments are unsubstantiated.

5.3 PRN 6246 Woodcastle (SO 0229 5816)
Category E

5.3.1 Fields in the vicinity of Woodcastle Farm were examined for surface features which would indicate the possible presence of a former castle, as the placename suggests. No distinctive features were noted apart from an area in the field immediately adjacent to the farmhouse on its southern side. This sloping field contained a level area approximately 45m east/west and 26m north/south enclosed on three sides by turf-covered banks. The fourth, northern side appears to be cut into the slope but as it backs up to the farm this is somewhat obscure. Excavation would be necessary to confirm the significance of these features but as the area is some 200m away from the nearest proposed corridor this could not be justified.

5.4 PRN 2281 Hen Faes Enclosure (SO 0217 5435)
Category F

5.4.1 It was suggested, on the basis of aerial photographic evidence, that this site represented part of a Roman Camp. Whilst this is possible, further evaluation disputed this interpretation and it was suggested that it is more likely to be a ploughed-out post-medieval enclosure boundary. No above-ground features were noted during the walk-over survey at this location. However, a watching brief should be carried out at the topsoil-stripping stage of road construction in this area as the site is close to a proposed corridor. If positive results were achieved at this stage, further excavation work would then be necessary to determine the significance of the site.

5.5 Site 4 Castell Bach (SO 0190 5821)
Category C

5.5.1 This is the site of house marked on the 1846 Tithe map and early editions of the Ordnance Survey 25 inch Sheet for the area. Evidence for its former existence at this location was found in the form of a small enclosure aligned south-east/north-west and defined on three sides by low banks, with an entrance mid-way along the north-western side. The western side is obscured by a hedge. The enclosure measures 24.5 x 17m overall and a slight ledge half-way along its length possibly indicates that it was a two-roomed structure. No other internal features were visible. This site is on the line of a road corridor and excavation would be necessary to further evaluate its importance.

5.6 Site 5 Tyrhydvellin (SO 0222 5539)
Category D

5.6.1 The site of a house marked on the 1846 Tithe map. No above-ground features were recorded during field survey. As an on-line roadway

option would directly affect this site, a watching brief at the stage of topsoil-stripping should be kept and any features recorded.

5.7 Site 6 Purgatory (SO 0227 5528) **Category D**

5.7.1 A house site marked on the 1846 Tithe map. No above-ground features were recorded during field survey. This site, as in the case of Tyrhydfellin (Para. 5.6 above), would be directly affected by an on-line option and the same recommendations for further archaeological work would apply.

5.8 Site 9 Possible Ridge and Furrow (SO 0190 5830) **Category D**

5.8.1 This area was examined but any above-ground feature which may have been present were obscured by un-mown grass.

5.9 Site 11 Possible Ridge and Furrow (SO 0215 5482) **Category D**

5.9.1 This field could not be examined satisfactorily because of the length of the grass.

5.10 Site 13 Drover's Road (SO 0190 5846 - SO 0210 5870) **Category C**

5.10.1 A well-defined hollow-way extending for a distance of approximately 400m through three fields to the north-west of the B4358 may represent a drover's road. The track is approximately 5.0m wide and up to 1.0m deep in places. It is also possible that this may follow the line of a putative Roman Road in this area but none of the characteristics of such a road were noted, although the possibility cannot be discounted. This site is directly on the line of three corridor options so that an adequate programme of recording and possibly trial excavation would be required in advance of road works.

6 NEW SITES RECORDED DURING THE WALKOVER SURVEY

6.1 Site 15 Ridge and Furrow (SO 0210 5470) **Category D**

6.1.1 Faint discontinuous ridges c. 5.0m wide aligned downslope on a north-west/south-east line and confined to the northern half of the field. This area would be directly affected by a road corridor if this option is taken. If so, even though these features are of a low archaeological importance, a descriptive/measured ground survey is recommended.

6.2 Site 16 Field Banks (SO 0235 5499) **Category D**

6.2.1 Low field banks representing former field boundaries were noted in conifer woodland at this location. These were not associated with any other features which may have indicated a house site. This site would be directly affected by three corridor options but rapid recording should be carried out at the topsoil-stripping phase of road works.

6.3 Site 17 Field Banks (SO 0235 5530)
Category D

6.3.1 A complex of field banks representing former field or enclosure boundaries were visible at this point. These would be affected by two corridor options.

6.4 Site 18 Trackway (SO0189 5870)
Category D

6.4.1 A terrace c. 4.50m wide cut into the steep slope above the stream and which extends for 55m along the eastern edge of the field. This probably represents a track leading from the mill which was formerly located near the south-eastern corner of the field (pers.comm. Mr L.Davies). This mill, of which there is now no trace, is shown on the 1846 Tithe map. If a corridor cuts through the trackway, a descriptive/measured survey should be made.

6.5 Site 19 Ridge and Furrow (centred at SO 018 587)
Category D

6.5.1 Faint traces of ridge and furrow cultivation strips aligned with the east-west slope of the field and terminating at a former field boundary were noted in this field. A road corridor option may cross these features and if so, a descriptive/measured survey of them should be made.

6.6 Site 20 Sewage Plant (SO 0171 5880)
Category C

6.6.1 The standing remains of a small sewage treatment plant formerly serving the Italian PoW camp formerly located to the west of the A470 on the outskirts of Newbridge (Pers.comm. Mr L. Davies). The plant consists of two small circular, brick-built settling tanks with some iron pipework in situ. There are also other brick-built structures of uncertain function associated with the tanks. This site is either in the direct line of or close to a corridor option. A descriptive/photographic survey in advance of road works would be adequate to record the site.

6.7 Site 21 Possible House Platform and Enclosure (SO 0184 5915)
Category C

6.7.1 A house platform 18.0m east-west x 6.0m north-south with low field banks to the north and north-west representing the remains of two enclosures associated with the platform. A trackway leads to the site from the east. As this site would be directly affected by a road corridor the site should be fully recorded in advance of road works and an option for limited trial-trenching considered

7 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Ten sites which were identified in the Stage 1 Desktop Study and seven new sites, all of which were directly on the line of, or close to a proposed road corridor option, were recorded during the course of the Walkover Survey.

7.2 Sites varied in their archaeological importance from the Scheduled Cwrt Llechrhyd Earthworks (PRN 1605) to relatively insignificant sites such as redundant field boundaries and ridge and furrow strips, and according to their designated categories, recommendations for further archaeological work have been outlined briefly in each case.

7.3 Cwrt Llechrhyd (PRN 1605) lies at the southern end of the area and is located close to four optional routes, three of which would directly threaten this important site. The route furthest from the site would be the preferred option, although further archaeological work should be considered whichever route is adopted, but particularly in the case of any works in close proximity to the monument.

7.4 To the north of this point, all four route options will directly affect archaeological sites and this is particularly true to the north and north-east of Newbridge where seven sites are vulnerable.

7.5 In order that minimal damage is caused to archaeological sites it would appear that the on-line option would be preferable.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPAT Contracting would like to acknowledge the kind co-operation of all landowners and occupiers during the course of the survey.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Thomas, D., 1995. *A470 Improvement: Cwmbach to Newbridge-on-Wye, Powys*, CPAT Report No. 129.

APPENDIX 1

A470 TRUNK ROAD: CWMBACH TO NEWBRIDGE IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

STAGE 2A: SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD WALKED SURVEY AND EVALUATION BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1.0 Background

1.1 The Engineering Consultancy operating on behalf of the Department of Highways and Transportation, Powys County Council propose to improve approximately 7.5km of the main A470 Trunk Road in the vicinity of Cwmbach and Newbridge on Wye near Builth Wells (from approximately SO 029 526 to SO 013 601). This entails straightening various sections of the present road and creating a new road corridor elsewhere.

1.2 It is considered by the Curatorial Section of CPAT who maintain the regional Sites and Monuments Record for Powys and act as archaeological advisers to local authorities in the region, that an archaeological assessment of the corridor within which the road improvements will occur is required because of its high archaeological potential, revealed by the number of sites of archaeological and historic interest already recorded.

1.3 These aspects has been covered in a brief (CPAT ASB 134) and a subsequent desktop survey, undertaken as stage 1 of the archaeological works, prepared by the Curatorial Section of CPAT for the Engineering Consultancy of Powys County Council and dated, in its revised form, to 16 January 1995.

1.4 Acting on the results of the stage 1 enquiry, the curatorial section of CPAT have prepared a second brief (ASB 145 dated 31st May 1995) outlining the proposed scheme of works for the stage 2 (A & B) archaeological survey.

1.5 In view of the excavation implication of the stage 2B evaluation, Powys County Council have requested that CPAT Contracts Section tender for the work of stage 2A with a subsequent bid for stage 2B once the full requirements are known.

2.0 Objectives

2.1. The initial objective of the Stage 2A assessment is to establish the total archaeological resource of the new road corridor by means of a field-walked evaluation to complement the desktop survey.

2.2 A further objective is the identification of archaeologically sensitive areas, followed by the production of broad recommendations where the archaeological resource is affected by the road proposals.

2.3 Where damage to the resource appears inevitable, an appropriate scheme of further work will be detailed.

3.0 Methods

3.1 Stage 1 of the assessment involved the examination of primary and

secondary source material including early maps, the Powys County Sites and Monuments Record and, if available, vertical and oblique aerial photography.

3.2 Stage 2A will take the form of a structured and methodical field examination of the suggested road corridors. Wherever possible transect walking will attempt to identify and map previously unrecognised sites.

3.3 A report will be prepared following stage 2A, providing an analysis of all data collected during the assessment. The report will be accompanied by an appropriate plan or plans. Together these will provide sufficient information on the archaeological resource for the archaeological adviser to the planning authority to assess the implications of the scheme. Appropriate recommendations will be included in the report.

4.0 Resources and Programming

4.1 The sources search and fieldwork will be conducted by an experienced field archaeologist from CPAT under the supervision of the Deputy Director of that organisation.

4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the fieldwork.

4.3 It is anticipated that the fieldwork together with a report covering these elements will be completed within three weeks of the commencement of Stage 2A of the project. It is anticipated that Stage 2A could be commenced within a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of four weeks of CPAT's quotation being accepted by the client, dependent on such variables as the weather, access and CPAT's other commitments.

4.4 A timetable for Stage 2 is dependent on the client's progress in developing the plans for the road improvement. As such no dates can be offered at present. The duration of Stage 2 should however be similar to that of Stage 1, namely its completion within three weeks of the commencement of the project.

Dr A. M. Gibson
13th June 1995