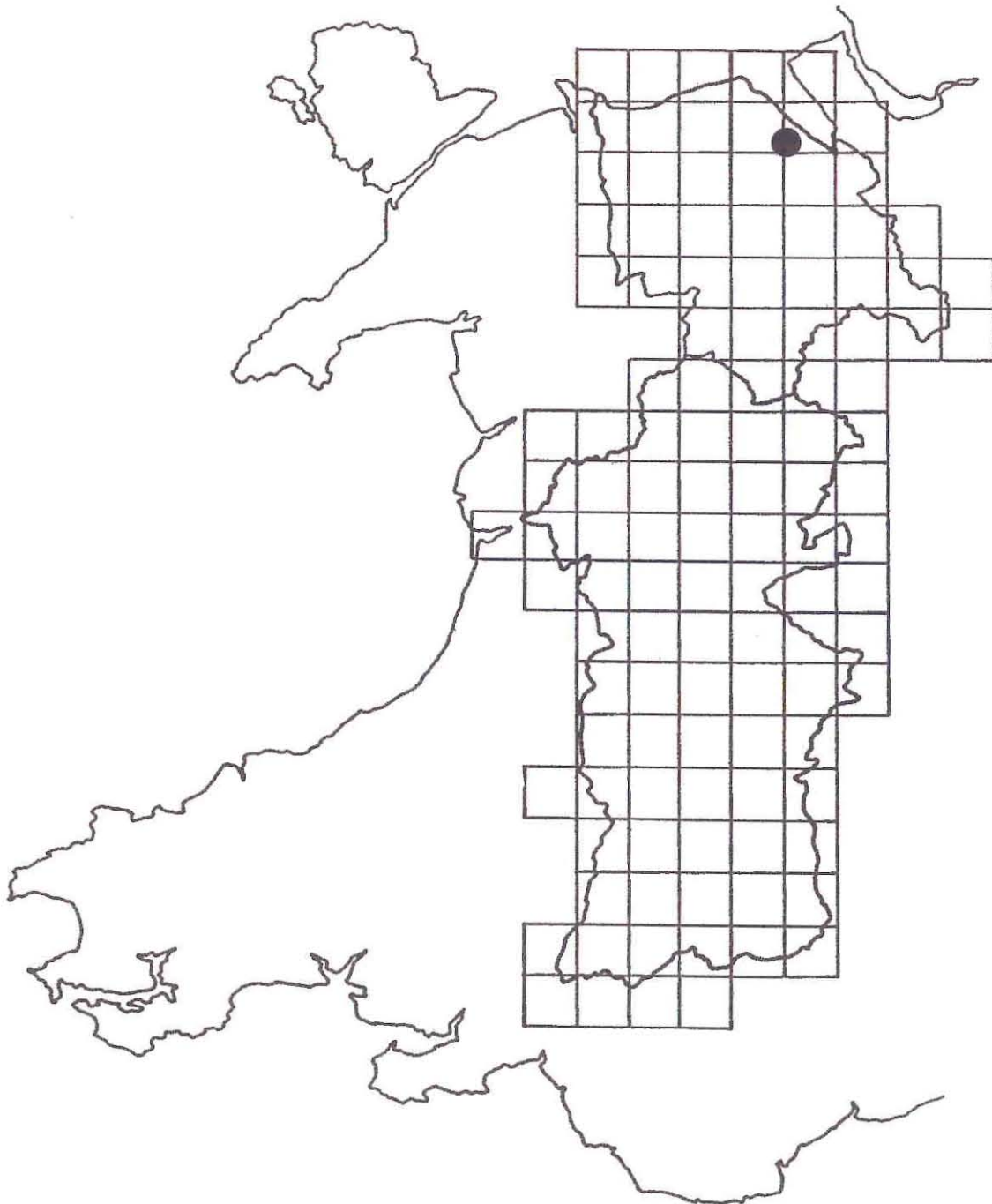


Mount Pleasant - Fferm Water Main, Clwyd

WATCHING BRIEF



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by WG Owen
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Report prepared for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

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1 Introduction

1.1 During October, 1994 Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust Contracting (henceforward CPAT Contracting) completed a field evaluation of a proposed pipeline route for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water. The pipeline ran roughly parallel to, and about 2.0 kilometres from the Clwyd coastline from Fferm (SJ 2160 7360) to Mount Pleasant (SJ 2340 7116) in the vicinity of the town of Flint. A report, CPAT Internal Report No. 113, was submitted to Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water in October 1994 (Hankinson 1994).

1.2 The report isolated 19 areas of potential archaeological interest, inferred from ground evidence, place names and antiquarian speculation, where further work might be necessary because of pipeline works, though it was considered that none of the archaeology was of such importance as to necessitate the diversion of the pipeline.

1.3 CPAT Contracting was asked by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water in November 1994 to submit a specification (Appendix 1) and quotation for carrying out these further archaeological works, namely a watching brief during the topsoil-stripping and trenching phases of the water main re-laying. This work also constituted Stage 4 of an archaeological brief (EVB 123) prepared by the curator of the Regional Sites and Monuments Record who acts as archaeological adviser to Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water.

1.4 Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water commissioned CPAT Contracting in January 1995 to carry out the work and this was undertaken and completed during the first half of February 1995. This report was prepared immediately afterwards.

2 Methodology

2.1 The entire length of the main pipeline wayleave corridor, some 3.25km long and generally 12m wide, was examined for evidence of archaeological features as topsoil stripping proceeded. In addition, two spur corridors leading from the main corridor to Ffrith Farm (SJ 212 731) and Maes-gwyn-mawr Farm (SJ 230 714), were also examined. Particular attention was given to the three locations identified in CPAT Report 113 where sites of possible archaeological significance had been located (PRNs 101638, 102706 and 106609 in that report).

2.2 A watching brief was maintained as trench-cutting proceeded along approximately 1100m of the pipeline route, that is approximately 33% of the complete route. Sections examined are shown in Fig 1.

2.3 Topsoil stockpiled along the length of the pipeline corridor was also examined for the presence of artifacts as were subsoils excavated during the course of trench-cutting.

3 Observations

3.1 The depth of topsoil stripped within the pipeline corridor generally did not exceed 0.30m except where ditches had been excavated alongside hedges. Artifacts recovered from the topsoil were exclusively of post-medieval and recent origin and consisted primarily of pottery sherds. The exception was a single, weathered, chert scraper of prehistoric date recovered from below the topsoil at SJ 2234 7256. The soil surface in the vicinity of this find was subsequently examined in detail but there were no indications of any features that could be associated with it.

3.2 In the vicinity of PRN 101638, a house site referred to as Castle Noble in CPAT Report 113, topsoil removal exposed an area of approximately 80 square metres containing stone and brick fragments. A part of this area, cleaned manually and partially excavated, established the presence of cobbles quite firmly set in a buff-coloured clay and which contained small fragments of late post-medieval and recent pottery. No wall lines were revealed and the area had evidently been much disturbed in the past. The depth of brick and stone above the apparently undisturbed natural clay did not exceed 0.25m and pottery fragments recovered were all of post-medieval date.

3.3 There were no indications of earlier phases of construction and there was nothing to indicate how the former building had come by its name. Information given by Mr Brynley Evans of Ffrith Farm confirmed that Castle Noble had been demolished in the 1950s and that at that time stone and brick was removed for road-formation elsewhere.

3.4 No features of archaeological significance were noted during topsoil stripping or trench cutting in the vicinity of PRN 102706, the location proposed for a possible motte and bailey castle mound. Artifacts recovered from the area consisted of pottery sherds of post-medieval and recent date.

3.5 An examination of ground surfaces following topsoil-stripping at the location of PRN 106609 which is on the conjectured alignment of Wat's Dyke revealed no evidence of its former existence there. Sections exposed during the course of trench-cutting revealed no features which could be interpreted as strata relating to a bank and ditch. It is thus unlikely that Wat's Dyke followed the proposed alignment and an examination of the topography of Coed Stanley to the north-east, which is steeply contoured and broken by deep gullies, also suggests that this alignment is not feasible.

3.6 It was noted that the cast-iron bowl, PRN 19574, located at SJ 2177 7192, remained in situ and had not been damaged during construction work. It was confirmed subsequently by Mr D B Hughes of Maes-gwyn-mawr Farm, that this object, a Pattinson Pan used in lead smelting for the separation of silver from lead, probably derived from Gadlys Farm close to the former lead smelting works at Gadlys.

4 Acknowledgments

4.1 CPAT Contracting would like to thank Mr D B Hughes of Maes-gwyn-mawr Farm and Mr Brynley Evans of Ffrith Farm for information included in this report. In addition we wish to thank D and T Construction for their cheerful cooperation and help during the course of the watching brief.

5 References

Hankinson, R. 1994 Mount Pleasant - Fferm Water Main, Clwyd CPAT Report No 113.

Appendix 1

PROPOSED MAINS PIPELINE BETWEEN MOUNT PLEASANT AND FFERM, NEAR FLINT, CLWYD

SPECIFICATION FOR A WATCHING BRIEF TO BE CONDUCTED BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

1.0 Background

1.1 Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water propose to lay a new water main between Maes Gwyn Bridge (at SJ 2339 7122) and the Fferm Reservoir (at SJ 2163 7356) to the south of Flint. This entails work over a 3km-long stretch of countryside and the line passes close to or may even directly affect several known archaeological monuments.

1.2 It is considered by the Curatorial Section of CPAT who maintain the regional Sites and Monuments Record and act as archaeological advisers to Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water that a multi-stage archaeological watching brief is required during the contractors' work to assess the archaeology of the pipeline corridor. This was referred to as Stage 4 in the curator's original brief (CPAT EVB 123).

2.0 Objectives

2.1. The objective of the fourth stage is to establish by a watching brief during topsoil stripping of the wayleave and during the cutting of the pipe trench, all features of archaeological interest exposed during ground disturbances connected with the mains pipeline.

2.2 The analysis of data from the watching brief will be synthesised to provide an appropriate report on the impact of the pipeline on the archaeological resource.

3.0 Methods

3.1 The watching brief will involve the examination of subsoil surfaces after topsoil has been stripped from the wayleave along the complete length of the pipeline.

3.2 The cutting of the pipe trench will be watched in the vicinity of four specific locations defined in a letter from the archaeological curator on 31 October 1994, namely in and around two former house sites, a mound of uncertain origin, and in the proposed setting of Wat's Dyke.

4.0 Resources and Programming

4.1 The watching brief 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 watching brief may take up to 13 days, though not consecutively. A draft report will be completed within two weeks of the completion of CPAT's fieldwork.

R. J. Silvester
21 November 1994

