

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

*Llanymynech Hillfort, Llanforda to Pant
Watermain*
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

CPAT Report No 221

*Llanymynech Hillfort, Llanforda to Pant
Watermain*
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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March 1997

Report for Severn Trent Water Ltd.

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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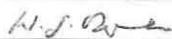
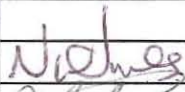
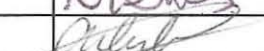
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CPAT Report Record

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APPENDIX: SPECIFICATIONS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 1996, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (henceforth CPAT Contracts) was requested by Severn Trent Water Limited to submit a quotation and specification for undertaking archaeological work in connection with the laying of an extra water main alongside the existing pipes at Llanymynech Hill Camp.
- 1.2 The Inspectorate of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, acting in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the Secretary of State for Wales, had determined that an archaeological watching brief was necessary during the pipelaying operations within the Scheduled Area of Llanymynech Hillfort (Mg 30). Accordingly, archaeological conditions had been incorporated within the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) detailing the archaeological works required. The provisions within the SMC required the stripping of topsoil and modern overburden within the easement under close archaeological supervision, with sufficient opportunity to subsequently excavate and record any features revealed.
- 1.3 CPAT Contracts were subsequently commissioned on 2nd October 1996 by Severn Trent Water Ltd to carry out the archaeological work required as defined in the submitted specification. This commenced on November 19th 1996 and was completed on January 17th 1997.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY (Fig. 1)

- 2.1 The proposed pipeline corridor (centred at SJ 2680 2208), at its closest point, lies approximately 80m west of the boundary of the Scheduled Area of Llanymynech Hill Camp which itself marks the national boundary between England and Wales.
- 2.2 Llanymynech Hill marks the southernmost point of an arc of Lower Carboniferous Limestone which extends south from the North Wales coast at Prestatyn, Flintshire. Outcrops of this formation are commonly visible throughout the hillfort. In places the limestone is altered to dolomites with mudstone bands and both lead and copper ores with cerussite and malachite as secondary oxidation products occur in a lode which strikes NNE from underground workings known as Ogof Mine (SJ2660 2222).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Llanymynech Hillfort lies on a prominent outcrop of Carboniferous Limestone, the 3km circuit of ramparts encloses an area of 57 ha, making it one of the largest hillforts in England and Wales. It has been suggested as the site of the last stand of Caractacus against the invading Romans (Jones 1988). Where the sides of the hill are steep as on the western side, the ramparts are univallate and were later incorporated into the line of Offa's Dyke. On the south-western side, the defences terminate at a line of natural precipitous cliffs known as Asterley Rocks. To the east, if defences did exist, these have been destroyed by quarrying but become discernible again at a point close to the modern access road to the golf-course (SJ 2690 2210) where the ramparts appear to be double (Fig. 2). To the north, they appear to be trivallate (Forde-Johnston 1976; Burnham 1994) with a clearly defined incurved entrance at SJ 2666 2260 and a possible second one at SJ 2688 2241 (Fox and Hemp 1926).
- 3.2 Little archaeological work has so far been undertaken in association with the hillfort. In 1981 a section through the ramparts was recorded during the laying of a pipe trench, which revealed the stone rampart and inner defensive ditch, together with metal working debris behind the rampart, relating to the reworking of locally smelted copper ores which were dated to the period between the 4th and 1st centuries BC (Musson 1981; Musson and Northover 1989). Other archaeological investigations within the hillfort interior have been limited to a study of peat deposits in a pond (SJ 269221, Martin 1992) and evaluation work associated with the construction of a new greenkeepers hut (Thomas 1995; Owen 1996). The latter has revealed the remains of an inhumation for which a radiocarbon date is pending.
- 3.3 Llanymynech Hill also has a long history of copper and lead mining dating back to at least the Roman period (Walters 1993), together with quarrying of exposed limestone outcrops.

- 3.4 In the late twelfth century the then Chancellor of England, Hubert Walter, hoped to raise part of Richard I's ransom from silver mines on Llanymynech Hill (McLeod *et al* 1987) and it is assumed that mining continued through the medieval period although direct evidence is hitherto lacking. In the 1690's the Myddleton family of Chirk Castle were reported to be re-opening old lead workings on the hill and about 1800 the geologist Robert Townson reported that calamine, lead and copper were being worked. Mining continued during the nineteenth century and in 1881 it was reported that two lead and copper miners lived in Llanymynech and seven lead and three copper miners in Pant. However, thereafter mining declined although limestone quarrying continued until the 1920's. Overgrown limestone quarry scoops and faces are visible immediately to the east of the southernmost point of the projected pipeline route.

4 THE WATCHING BRIEF (Fig. 3)

- 4.1 Approximately 130m of the 12m wide pipeline corridor were excavated on both sides of the road. Initially, topsoil consisting of a reddish-brown sandy loam and varying in depth from 0.25m to 0.45m, was removed by machine exposing a spread of material, largely limestone fragments representing spoil from the 1981 pipeline excavation. This was also removed exposing a yellowish-brown subsoil below it the surface of which, in places, contained charcoal fragments and smears. This surface was cleaned manually and examined for features of archaeological significance. Within the corridor on the western side of the road a single linear feature, max. 0.50m wide, extended across the exposed area and was interpreted as a field drainage channel which, on the basis of pottery sherds recovered from it, was of post-medieval origin.
- 4.2 The pipeline corridor on the eastern side of the road revealed two areas of interest. At a point approximately halfway along its length and extending some 35m to the east, a distinct bank was exposed. Previously, this had been thought to be possibly a part of the hillfort defences. Excavation, however, showed that this was a natural limestone scarp and that there were no traces of a ditch associated with it. Towards the southern end of the corridor limestone outcrops were particularly abundant and fractured and there was some evidence to suggest that limestone fragments between the outcrops representing 1981 spoil disposal overlay a layer of limestone fragments contained in a reddish brown clayey sand which may have formed spoil from an earlier phase of quarrying. No dating evidence was, however, recovered.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No features or finds relating to the prehistoric phase of activity in the area were revealed by excavation within the pipeline corridor. Finds recovered were all of post-medieval origin.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 CPAT wish to thank the staff of both Severn Trent Water and Eyde Pipelines for their assistance during the course of watching brief.

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APPENDIX 1**LLANFORDA TO PANT MAIN.
SAM Mg30, LLANYMYNECH HILL CAMP.****SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST****1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The proposed development at Llanymynech Hill Camp involves the laying of an extra watermain pipeline alongside the existing pipes within the Welsh section of the above named scheduled ancient monument.
- 1.2 This area lies within the Iron Age hillfort of Llanymynech Hill which is designated as a monument of national importance by the Secretary of State for Wales and appears in the schedule of ancient monuments as Mg30.
- 1.3 The Inspectorate of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments in their capacity as archaeological advisers to the Secretary of State for Wales have determined that an Archaeological watching brief is necessary to assess the implications of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly archaeological conditions have been incorporated within the Scheduled Monument Consent which describes the scheme of archaeological works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
 - 2.1.1 to record the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of any archaeological deposits and/or features revealed within the area of the proposed development during the development works in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to excavate manually and record any archaeological features recorded during the monitored topsoil stripping of the pipetrench;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

3 Methods

- 3.1 The watching brief will be carried out according to the conditions contained within the SMC (conditions 4-6) and will involve the examination of all the groundworks in the archaeological sensitive areas.
- 3.2 All archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be excavated by hand and recorded by drawn section and/or photography.
- 3.3 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the SMC (condition 5). This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Catalogue of sites identified with notes on their condition and significance, 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 watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled and experienced archaeologist. Overall supervision will be by Dr A Gibson, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the watching brief.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the watching brief will take no more than 7 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 on the state of the site and negotiated access. 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.

A.M. Gibson
1st August 1996

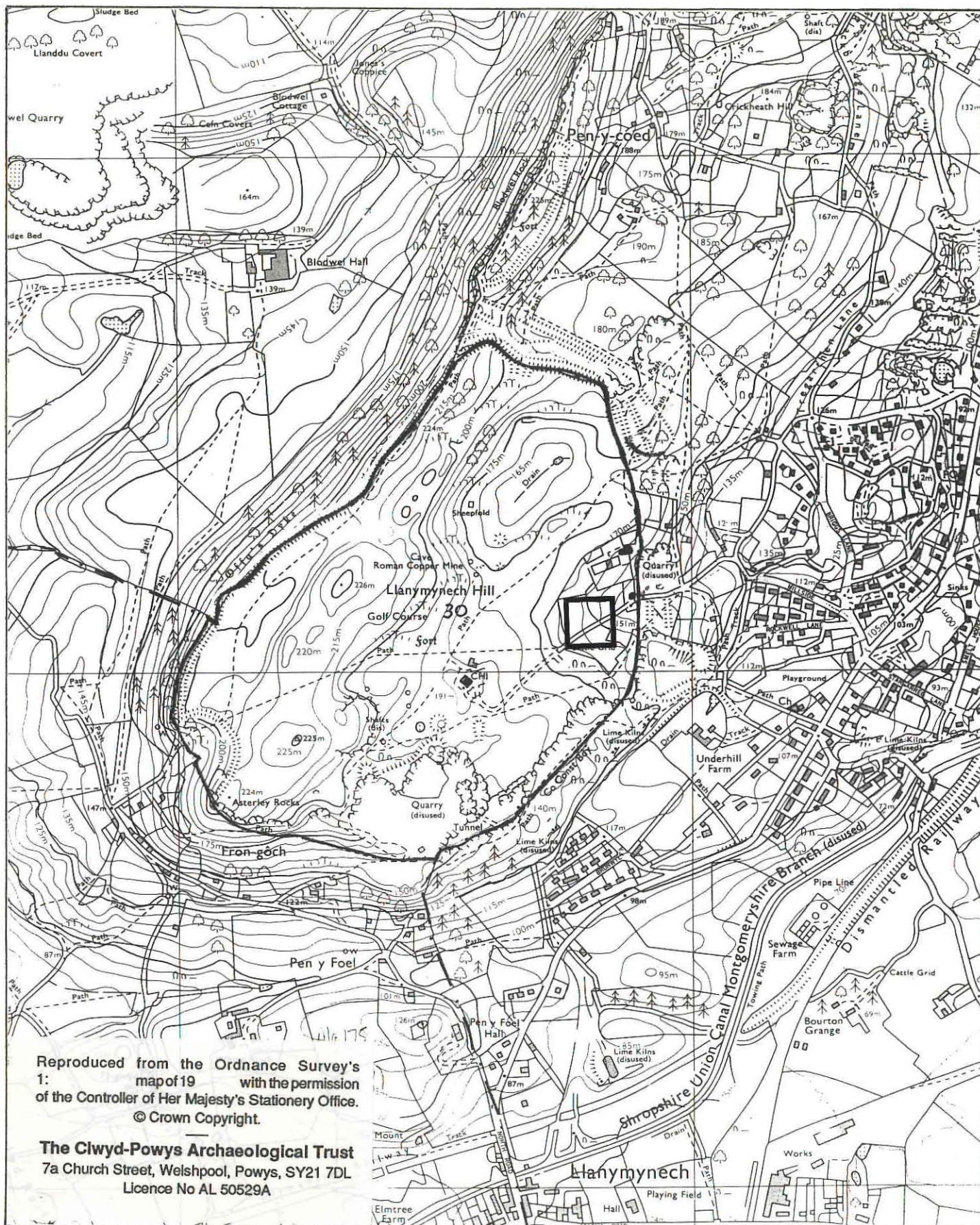
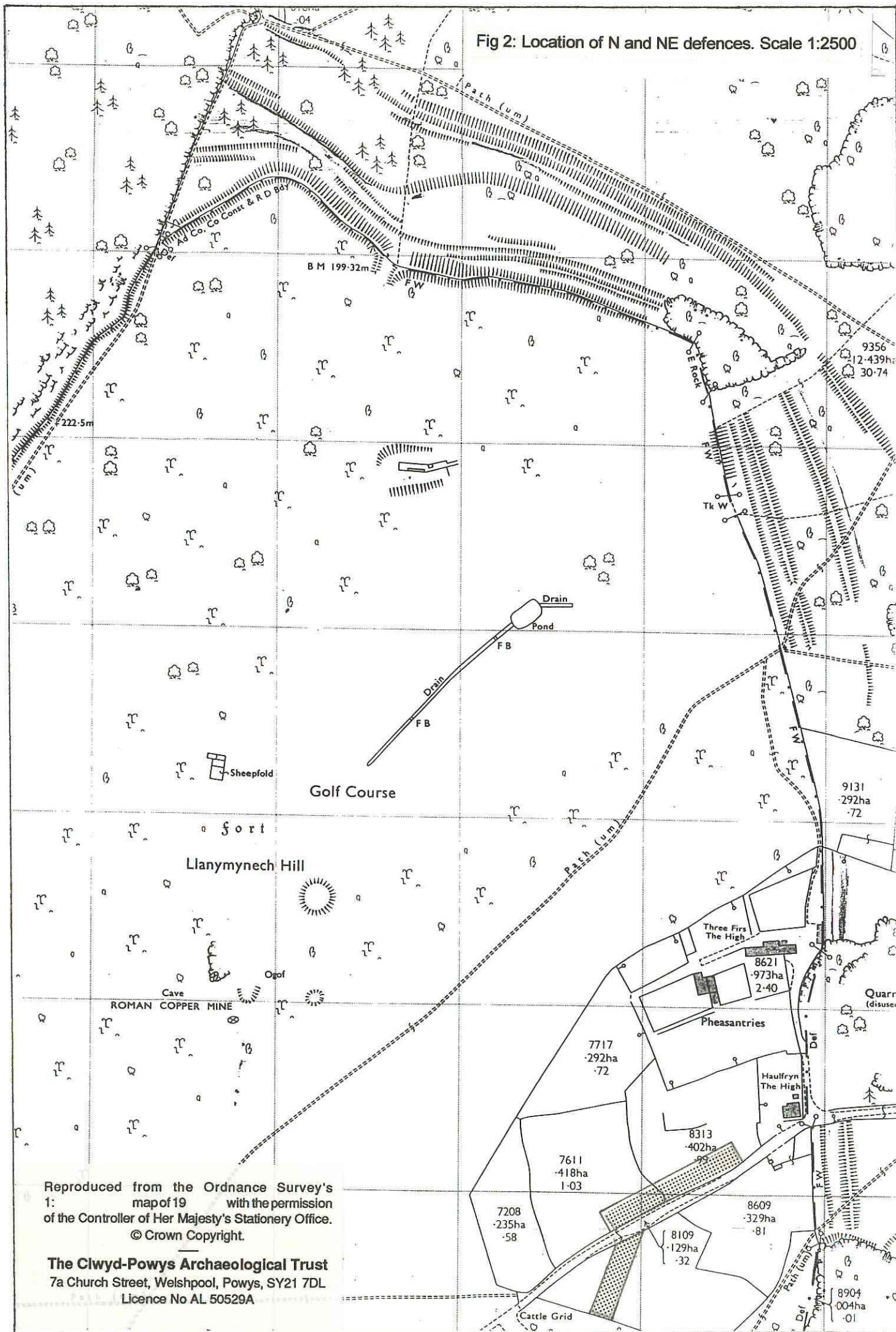


Fig. 1: Location. Scale 1:25000

Fig 2: Location of N and NE defences. Scale 1:2500



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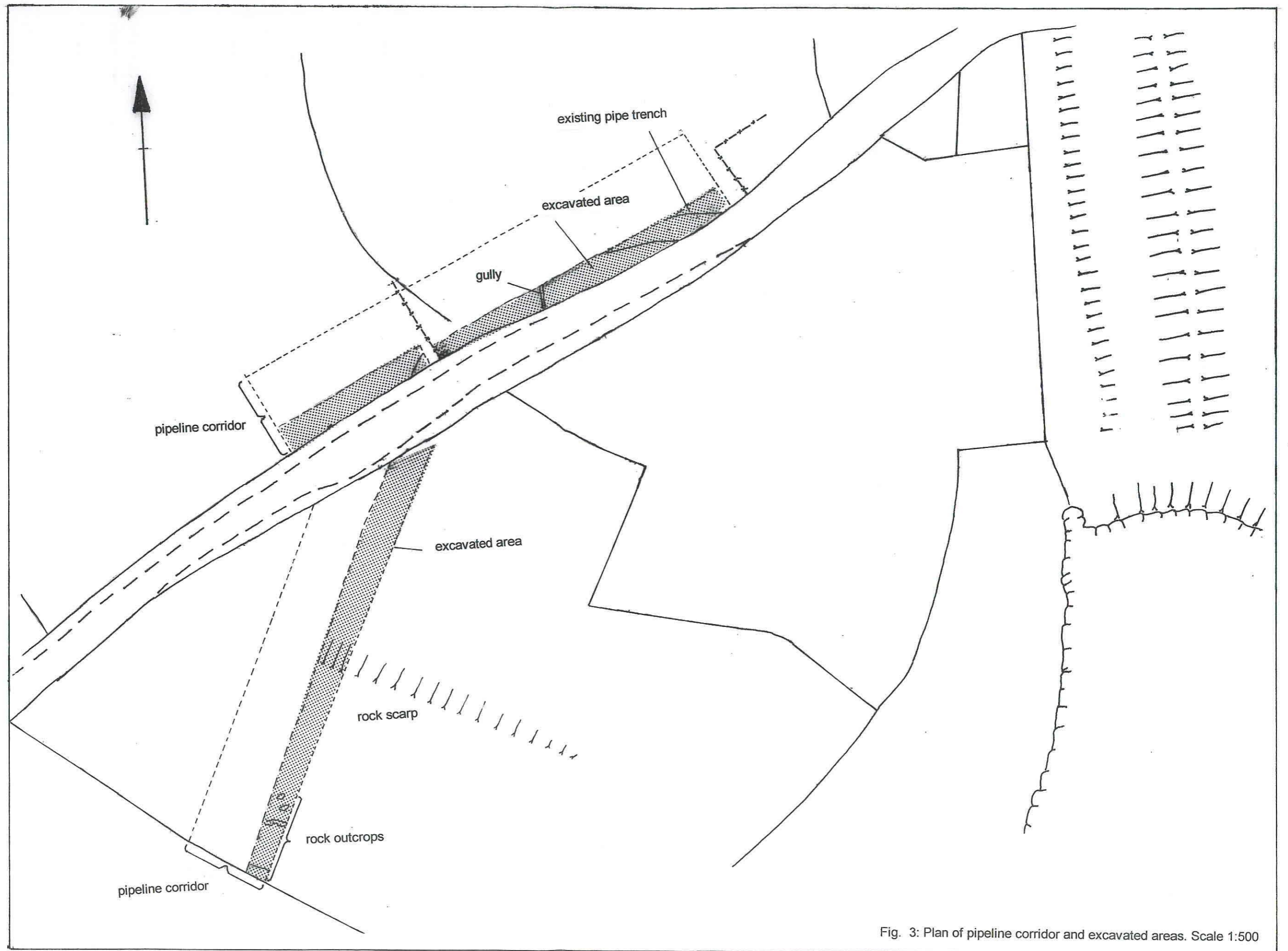


Fig. 3: Plan of pipeline corridor and excavated areas. Scale 1:500