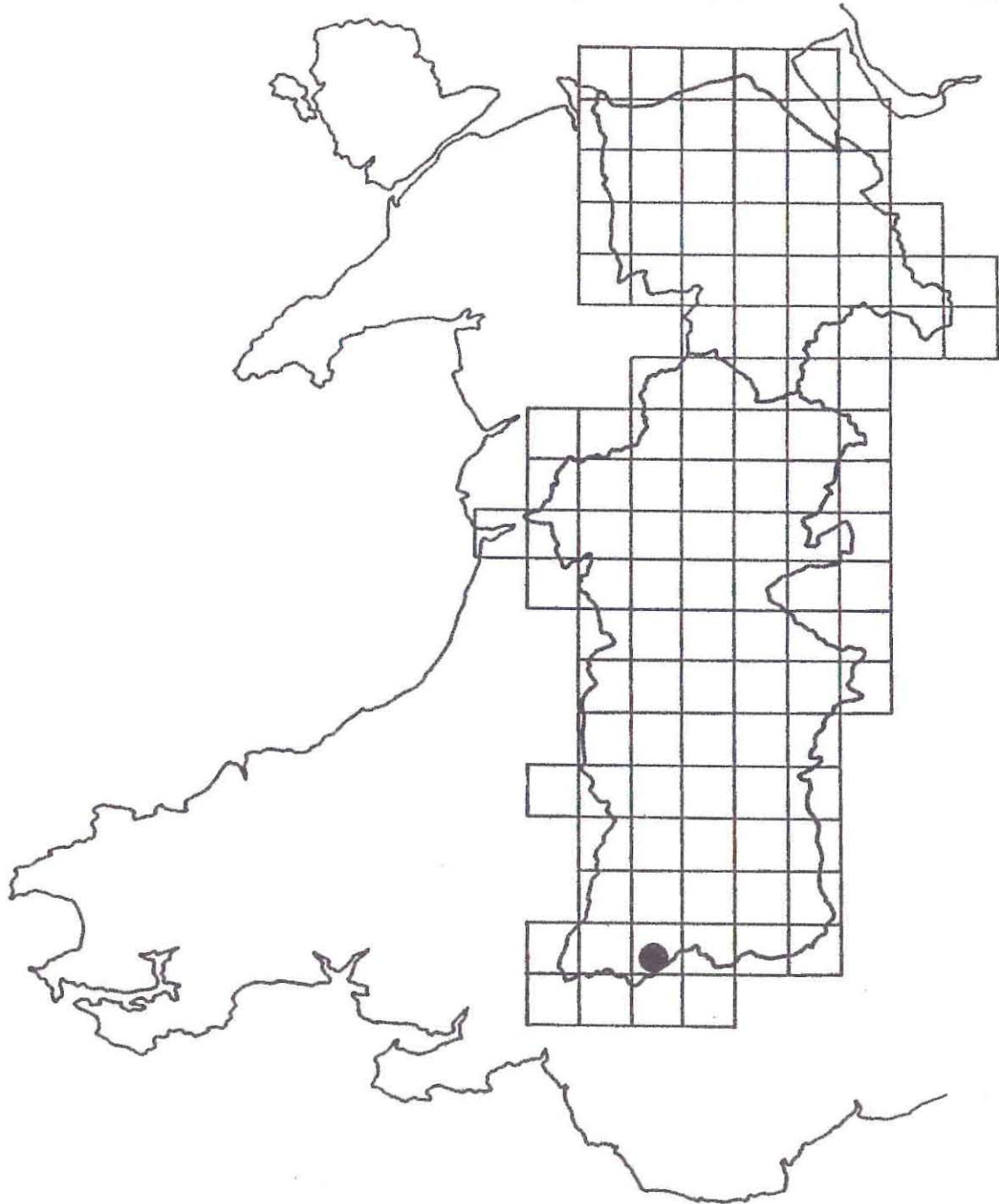


*Ystradfellte-Pontneddfechan*

*Trunk Main, Powys*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

by W G Owen and P Frost  
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Report prepared for Welsh Water/Dwr Cymru

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited in February 1994 by Welsh Water (South Western Division) to prepare a specification and to tender for a two-stage archaeological evaluation consisting of a desk-top assessment and a field survey to determine the archaeological sensitivity of land on the alignment of a proposed Trunk Mains pipeline. This was to be constructed partially parallel to the existing mains from SN 9110 0910, north of Pontneddfechan to SN 9400 1440 north of Ystradfellte in the extreme south of Breconshire.

1.2 This was in response to recommendations made by the Curatorial Section of CPAT, who maintain the County Sites and Monuments Record for Powys. Their brief (CPAT EVB 74) incorporated the suggestion that while no known archaeological features appeared to be directly affected by the proposed route, there was a strong possibility that previously undiscovered and unrecorded sites could be present which might be partially or wholly destroyed by the excavation of the pipeline corridor. It was also stated that a 100m-transect either side of the pipeline course should be included in the evaluation to allow for possible variations in the final route due to various constraints.

1.3 Subsequently, in February 1994, the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was commissioned to carry out the evaluation. The desk top research stipulated by the brief and outlined in the specification (Appendix 1) was subsequently carried out in April 1994 and the field survey undertaken in late June/early July 1994.

## 2 Location (Fig. 1)

2.1 The proposed route of the new 300mm pipeline commences at the existing Hendrefydd Service Reservoir at SN 9100 0905 whilst the new 600mm pipeline takes a line to the north of this from Cefn d'rysgoed at SN 9097 0946. The 300mm line then follows the western edge of the unclassified Pontneddfechan - Ystradfellte road until it joins the 600mm line at SN 9102 0974. The line continues northwards along the roadside which it leaves at SN 9205 1180. It then continues in a north-easterly direction, crosses the Afon Mellte at SN 9300 1320 and meets the road north of Garreg Fawr at SN 9370 1420. It terminates north-east of this juncture at Goitre (SN 9400 1440).

## 3 Topography, Soils and Land Use

3.1 The proposed route lies in the valley area between Afon Nedd and Afon Mellte crossing the latter at a point some 300m south of Ystradfellte. Contours are generally moderate along the route except for some 600m to the north of Porth yr Ogof where it is adjacent to precipitous cliffs. Steep slopes also occur within the 200m survey area to the south-east and east of Ystradfellte.



3.2 Soils are derived from either Carboniferous or Palaeozoic sandstones, mudstones or shales and vary locally from fine loamy soils of the Brickfield 2 and East Keswick 1 series to fine loams over clay with thin peaty surface horizons of the Wilcocks 1 series (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984) These are at least seasonally waterlogged where drainage is impeded, a feature that is reflected in the intensity of drainage work that has taken place in the past where this was required. Although the soils frequently overlie Carboniferous limestone beds, they are generally slightly acidic and this feature associated with moderate or impeded drainage and shallowness of profile is reflected in past and current land use which is a mixed stock-farming economy supported on permanent pasture. There is also evidence to suggest that the Comin y Rhos area has been utilised for peat-cutting in the past.

3.3 Where they exist, woodlands within and adjacent to the pipeline corridor route consist either of multi-species, mature, deciduous stands or areas of scrub. Management of these areas is minimal.

#### **4 Methods**

4.1 Stage 1 of the evaluation comprised a desk-based assessment of currently available information on the archaeology of the area. This included consultation of the Powys County Sites and Monuments Record at Welshpool and the examination of available cartographic and documentary sources lodged at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. An examination was also made of available aerial photography cover of the area including Royal Air Force verticals and of obliques taken from both the collections of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW), Aberystwyth, and from the archive collections of the CPAT.

4.2 Stage 2 of the evaluation attempted to identify through fieldwork areas of archaeological sensitivity within the 100m-wide corridors on either side of the proposed pipeline route. Features of archaeological significance were recorded on plan at a scale of 1:2500 and a 35mm colour transparency record of archaeological features was maintained.

#### **5 The Desk-top Assessment**

5.1 The early extant estate maps for the Ystradfellte area do not cover land falling within the pipeline corridor.

5.2 The Ordnance Surveyor's survey drawing of 1813, revised in 1830, indicates no features of potential archaeological interest in the Mellte valley apart from Castell Coch located to the west of Goetre (SN 9359 1448). This is outside the survey area. However, several trackways are depicted, most of which appear on later maps. The 1813 drawing is generally unhelpful in indicating enclosure boundaries apart from in the vicinity of Comin y Rhos where they appear to define the common.



5.2 The 1842 Tithe Apportionment for Ystradfellte Parish recorded the land-use along the pipeline corridor as either arable, pasture, woodland or meadow. No sites of archaeological significance were indicated on the accompanying map.

5.3 The 1st and 2nd edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of 1886 and 1904 respectively indicate the continued existence of the same field boundaries and woodland areas as were shown on the earlier Tithe map with few, if any, obvious changes.

5.4 Sites of possible archaeological significance identified from cartographic sources are summarised as follows:

5.4.1 PAR 7921 (SN 9250 1210): An 'old lime-kiln' situated on the edge of woodland to the north of Nant-y-Carad appears on both the 1st and 2nd edition 1:2500 OS Maps (Brecknock Sheets 44.4 and 44.8 respectively). This lies approximately 15m to the north-west of a trackway running in a south-westerly direction from Porth yr Ogof towards Brynbwch which is shown on the Ordnance Surveyor's survey drawing of 1813.

5.4.2 PAR 7922 (SN 9185 1155): An 'old lime-kiln' located some 10m to the north-west of the entrance trackway to Brynbwch again appears on both the 1st and the 2nd edition OS Maps.

5.5 PAR 7923 (SN 9170 1090): A 'ruin' appears on the 1st edition OS Map of 1886 (Brecknock Sheet 44.12) at the house site named as Ton-yr-efail. It is unclear whether this refers to the house site or to the remains of a building located close to the house. The house which now stands in this position is in plan and dimensions approximately the same as that depicted on both the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps.

5.6 No known archaeological features are recorded for the area of the pipeline either in the Powys County Sites and Monuments Record or the records held by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments.

5.7 The area to the north and west of the pipeline corridor contains several recorded cairns and hilltop enclosure sites. The larger archaeological sites of Castell Coch (SN 9359 1448), a medieval masonry castle, and Craig-y-Dinas (SN 9130 0800), an Iron Age hillfort, are located to the north and south of the pipeline corridor respectively.

5.8 Examination of aerial photographic records failed to identify any archaeological features along the pipeline corridor.

## 6 The Field Survey

6.1 Sites recorded within the pipeline corridor during the course of field survey are summarised below. In addition, sites noted in cartographic sources which could not be located during the course of the survey are also included.

PAR 7921 (SN 9520 1210; Fig.5) The ruinous remains of the lime-kiln referred to in 5.4.1 above. This is located 15m north-west



of trackway PAR 7926. Now only the north-western half of the kiln remains, stonework of the south-west section presumably having been largely robbed. The surviving structure covers an area of approximately 4.5 x 4.0m and rises to a height of about 1.5m above present ground level. It is possible that structural elements remain intact below rubble on the south and south-eastern sides. The kiln is located immediately to the south-west of a former field boundary which implies perhaps that the area was formerly not woodland. A fairly extensive former quarry is located at the base of limestone outcrops to the north-west of the kiln and may be associated with it.

PAR 7922 (SN 8185 1155; Fig 4) No traces of this lime-kiln recorded in Par.5.4.2 were located and Mr. W.C. Morgan of Bryn bwch could not recall any visible remains in that area in the last 40 years.

PAR 7923 (SN 1970 1090; Fig.3) No visible remains of the ruin referred to in Par. 5.5 were located and the owners of the present house at Ton-yr-efail could not recall any features which could relate to the map information.

PAR 7924 (SN 9382 1412; Fig.7) Semi-circular earthwork bank 3.2m wide and up to 1.0m high located west of access track to Goetre Farm. No recognisable features are enclosed within the bank. The area has been previously disturbed by pipeline installation and the earthworks are truncated on the eastern side by the trackway and adjacent hedge.

PAR 7925 (SN 9333 1335 - SN 9314 1324; Fig.6) Trackway extending for a distance of approximately 200m mainly along the western edge of a derelict woodland area. The track which is now abandoned is approximately 3.0m wide and is bounded on both sides by dry-stone walls which are now ruinous. At its southern end, the track follows a field boundary in a north-westerly direction for approximately 40m. This track is first depicted cartographically on the Ordnance Surveyor's drawing of 1813. Low remnant field boundaries are visible in the scrub woodland to the east of this trackway which are not shown on any of the maps examined.

PAR 7926 (SN 9274 1243; Fig.6) Maes-porth farmstead. This is currently used as a barn but within it the structural walls of the old farmhouse are still standing to a maximum height of 1.50m. Overall dimensions are: 16.5m NW/SE and 5.00m NE/SW. No interior features remain but its dimensions suggest the possibility that it may have been a long-house perhaps of medieval origin.

PAR 7927 (SN 9278 1240 - SN 9192 1168; Fig 5) This trackway extends for a distance of approximately 1150m from Porth yr Ogof at its north-eastern end to its junction with the Pontneddfechan-Ystrad-y-fellte road in the south-west. Its average width is c3.0m and for most of its way it forms a hollow-way bounded either by dry-stone walls or earth/stone banks. Currently it is a public footpath.

PAR 7928 (centred at SN 7275 1265; Fig 5) Short trackway 60m long aligned east-west and joining trackway PAR7927 at its eastern end. Width of track c3.20m; bounded on each side by dry-



stone walls. This leads to a small enclosure 16m x 16m at its western end within which is a level platform partly cut out of the slope at its western end. There are no structural features within this. It is possibly a small quarry scoop.

PAR 7929 (SN 9180 1106; Fig.4) Marker stone 0.42m x 0.40m x 0.19m firmly set in the ground adjacent to hedge-line. Formerly may have functioned as a boundary marker.

## 7 Discussion

7.1 For about a half of its total length, the proposed pipeline corridor passes through open fields where the level of pasture improvement has probably been persistent, if not intensive for many years. As a consequence of this, it is likely that the destruction of some archaeological features has occurred as well as the degradation of others. For instance, apart from remnant banks little remains of the feature interpreted as a possible enclosure at the northern end of the pipeline (PAR 7924). It may also be significant that the lime-kiln (PAR 7921) is located in unimproved land whereas another kiln (PAR 7922) in a more vulnerable position has completely disappeared.

7.2 Seven sites of archaeological interest were identified from fieldwork. None can be ascribed to the prehistoric period. The long-house form of Maes-porth hints at a medieval origin but cannot be substantiated. It is likely that all the identified sites relate to the post-medieval period, perhaps from the time of enclosure onwards, the trackways could quite easily be earlier.

## 8 Recommendations

8.1 In this section mitigation strategies are recommended for those sites which may be damaged by the proposed pipeline route in its present form.

8.2 None of the sites recorded can be regarded as being of national importance (i.e. those that would meet the scheduling criteria laid down by Cadw/Welsh Historic Monuments but all of them are of regional importance and should, therefore, be preserved if possible.

8.3 PAR 7926. Approximately 340m of this trackway (SN 9252 1209 - SN 9272 1237) would be severely affected and largely destroyed if a wide wayleave corridor was constructed adjacent to it. This trackway is also a public footpath of some importance within the Brecon Beacons National Park and it is therefore recommended that in this area a realignment of the wayleave should be considered.

8.4 PAR 7921 This lime-kiln is located approximately 15m to the north-west of trackway PAR 7926 and might therefore be damaged or destroyed by wayleave construction. If a realignment of the wayleave is not possible, it is recommended that this structure be excavated and recorded in advance of construction

work.

8.5 PAR 7928 This trackway is directly in the line of the wayleave. If it is not possible to avoid this site, it is recommended that a watching-brief is kept at the time of pipeline construction.

8.6 PAR 7924 A watching brief is recommended as work proceeds in this area.

8.7 As it is possible that archaeological sites lacking surface traces exist along the line of the wayleave, it is strongly recommended that a rapid field survey of the wayleave be undertaken after the topsoil has been stripped away.

## 9 Acknowledgements

9.1 Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust is grateful to the landowners of the area for their permission to examine the proposed pipeline corridor and in particular for the interest shown during the fieldwork.

## 10 Sources

### 10.1 Cartographic

1813 Ordnance Surveyor's Drawings (revised 1830); Scale 1:63,360

1842 Township of Ystradfellte Tithe Map (National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. AC/757)

1886 OS 1st edition 25" Brecknock Sheet 44.4; Scale 1:2500

1886 OS 1st edition 25" Brecknock Sheet 44.12; Scale 1:2500

1886 OS 1st edition 25" Brecknock Sheet 44.15; Scale 1:2500

1891 OS 1st edition 6" Brecknock Sheet 44 NE; Scale 1:10560

1891 OS 1st edition 6" Brecknock Sheet 44 SE; Scale 1:10560

1904 OS 2nd edition 25" Brecknock Sheet 44.8; Scale 1:2500

1904 OS 2nd edition 25" Brecknock Sheet 44.11; Scale 1:2500

### 10.2 Written

Rudeforth C.C. et al. 1984. Soils and Their Uses in Wales. Soil Survey of England and Wales Bulletin No 11. Harpenden.



## **Appendix 1**

### **PROPOSED TRUNK MAIN BETWEEN YSTRADFELLTE AND PONTNEDDFECHAN, POWYS**

#### **SPECIFICATION FOR A COMBINED STAGE 1 AND STAGE 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TO BE CONDUCTED BY CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

### **1.0 Background**

1.1 Welsh Water propose to replace an existing trunk mains with a new pipeline on a parallel alignment from north of Ystradfellte (at SN 94001440) to north of Pontneddfechan (at SN 91100910). This entails work over a 7km-long stretch of countryside in southern Powys and although there are no known archaeological monuments on the precise line, there are examples close by.

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 local authorities in the region, that a multi-stage archaeological evaluation is required to assess the archaeology of the pipeline corridor, the later stages to be dependent on the results of the first two stages. The report on Stages 1 and 2 is to be in a form that can be assessed by the archaeological curator who will suggest what if any measures might be required for Stages 3, 4 and 5.

1.3 These aspects have been covered in a Brief (CPAT EVB 74) prepared by the Curatorial Section of the CPAT.

### **2.0 Objectives**

2.1. The objective of the first stage of the evaluation is to establish from desk-top study all recorded sites of archaeological interest in the vicinity of the proposed trunk mains pipeline.

2.2 The fieldwork element of the evaluation is defined as Stage 2 and is designed to record in appropriate detail the archaeology of the same area.

2.3 The analysis and integration of data from the desk-top and fieldwork elements will aim to provide a firm basis for assessing the archaeological implications of the pipeline scheme.

### **3.0 Methods**

3.1 The desk-top assessment will involve the examination of primary and secondary source material including early maps, the Powys County Sites and Monuments Record and, if available, vertical aerial photography.

3.2 Fieldwork will take the form of a structured and methodical

field examination of the pipeline corridor.

3.3 Following 3.1 and 3.2 an analysis of the desk-top and fieldwork data accompanied by an appropriate plan will be prepared as a draft report for the client.

#### 4.0 Resources and Programming

4.1 The desk-top assessment 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 desk-top assessment and the fieldwork together with a draft report covering these elements (and representing Stages 1 and 2 as outlined in the curatorial brief) will be completed within two weeks of the commencement of the project. It is anticipated that the project could be commenced within one calendar month of CPAT's quotation being accepted, dependent on such variables as the weather, access and CPAT's other commitments.

R. J. Silvester  
01 February 1994



## ERRATUM

Due to an oversight two of the PARs used in Sections 5.4, 6.1 and 8.4 and on Figs 4 and 5, have duplicated numbers used in a previous report.

For future reference, the site recorded here as PAR 7921 is now registered in the Powys Sites and Monuments Record as PAR 7930, while PAR 7922 is now PAR 7931.

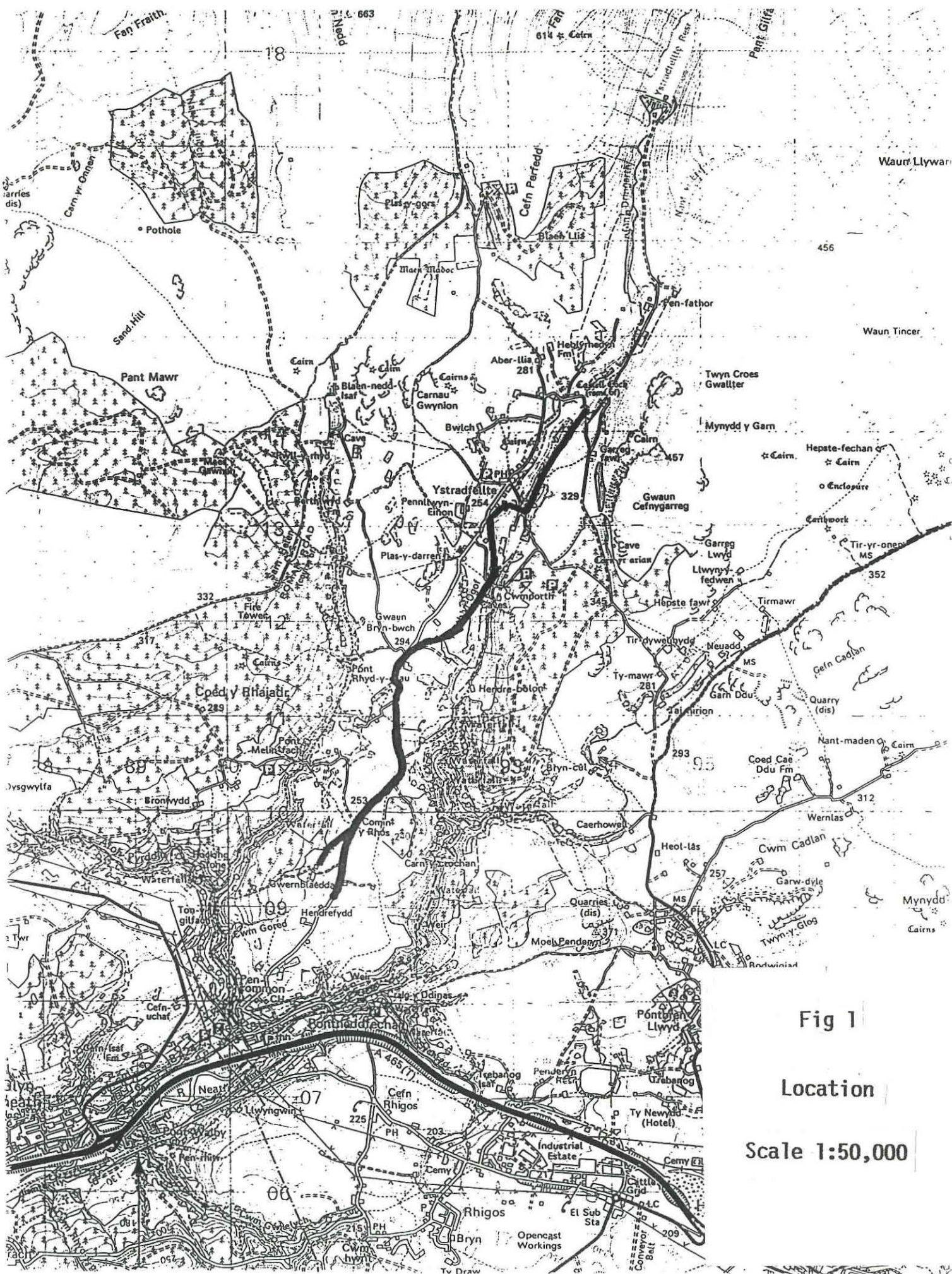


Fig 1

Location

Scale 1:50,000



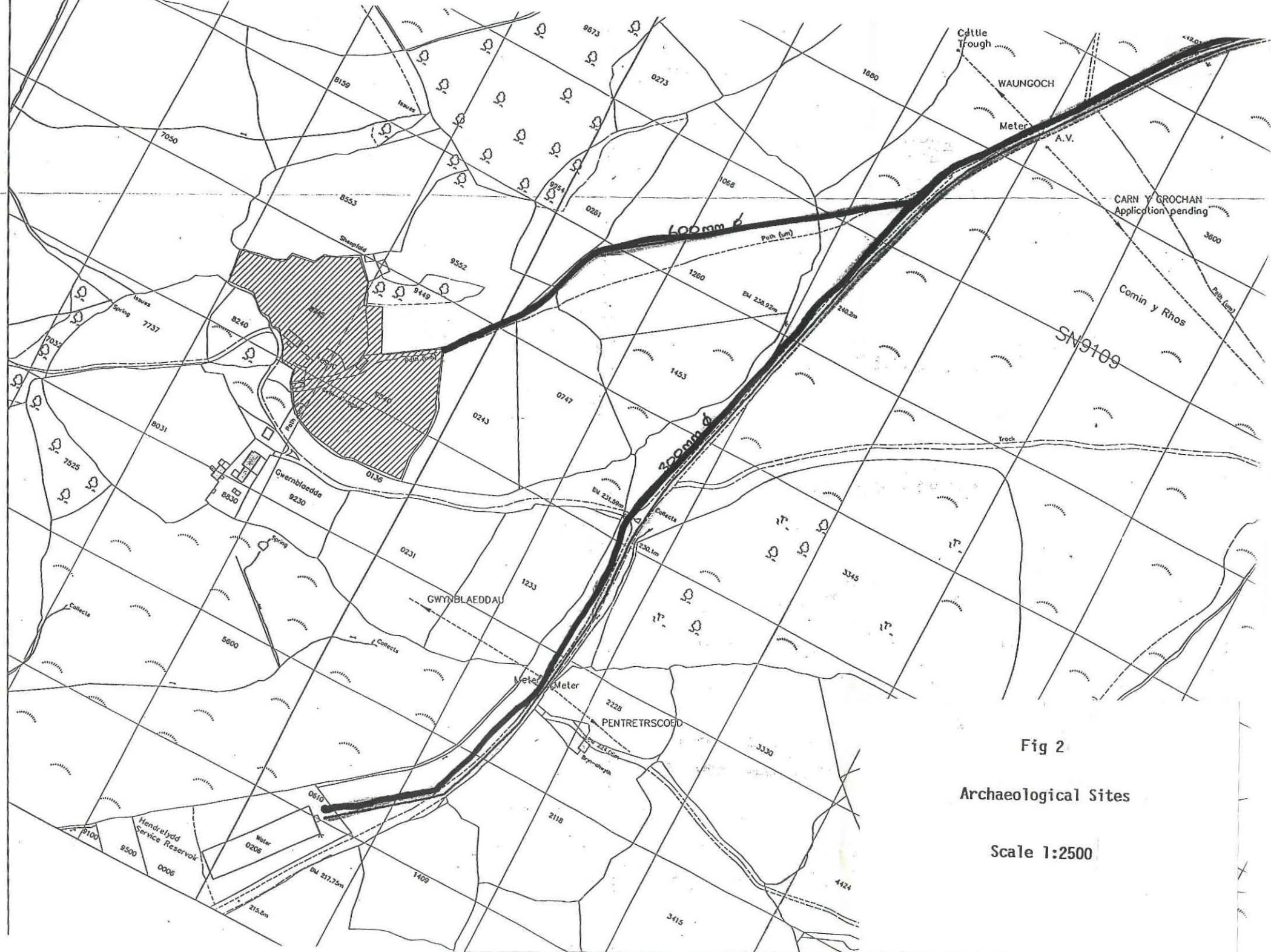


Fig 2

Archaeological Sites

Scale 1:2500







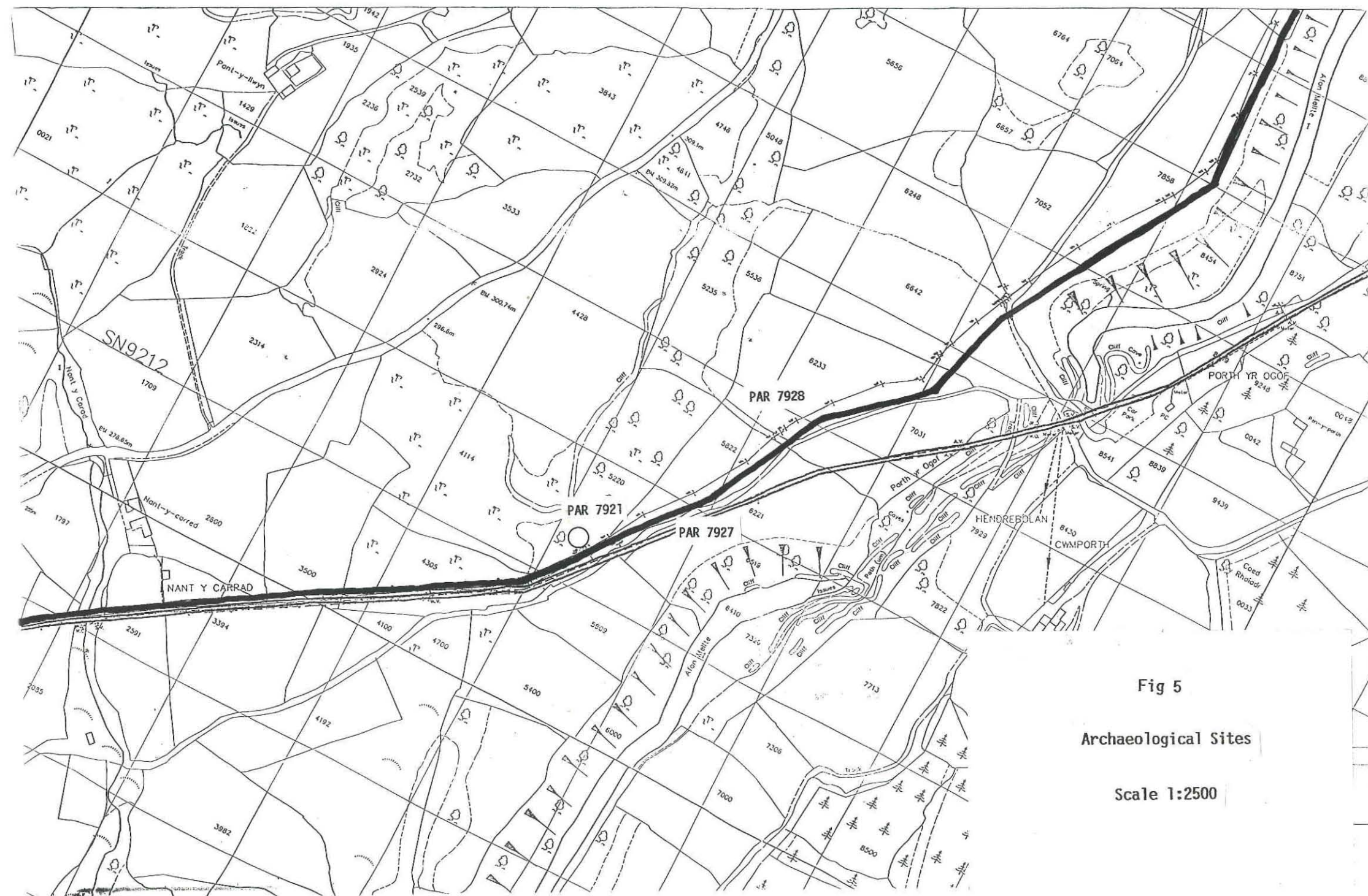


Fig 4

Archaeological Sites

Scale 1:2500

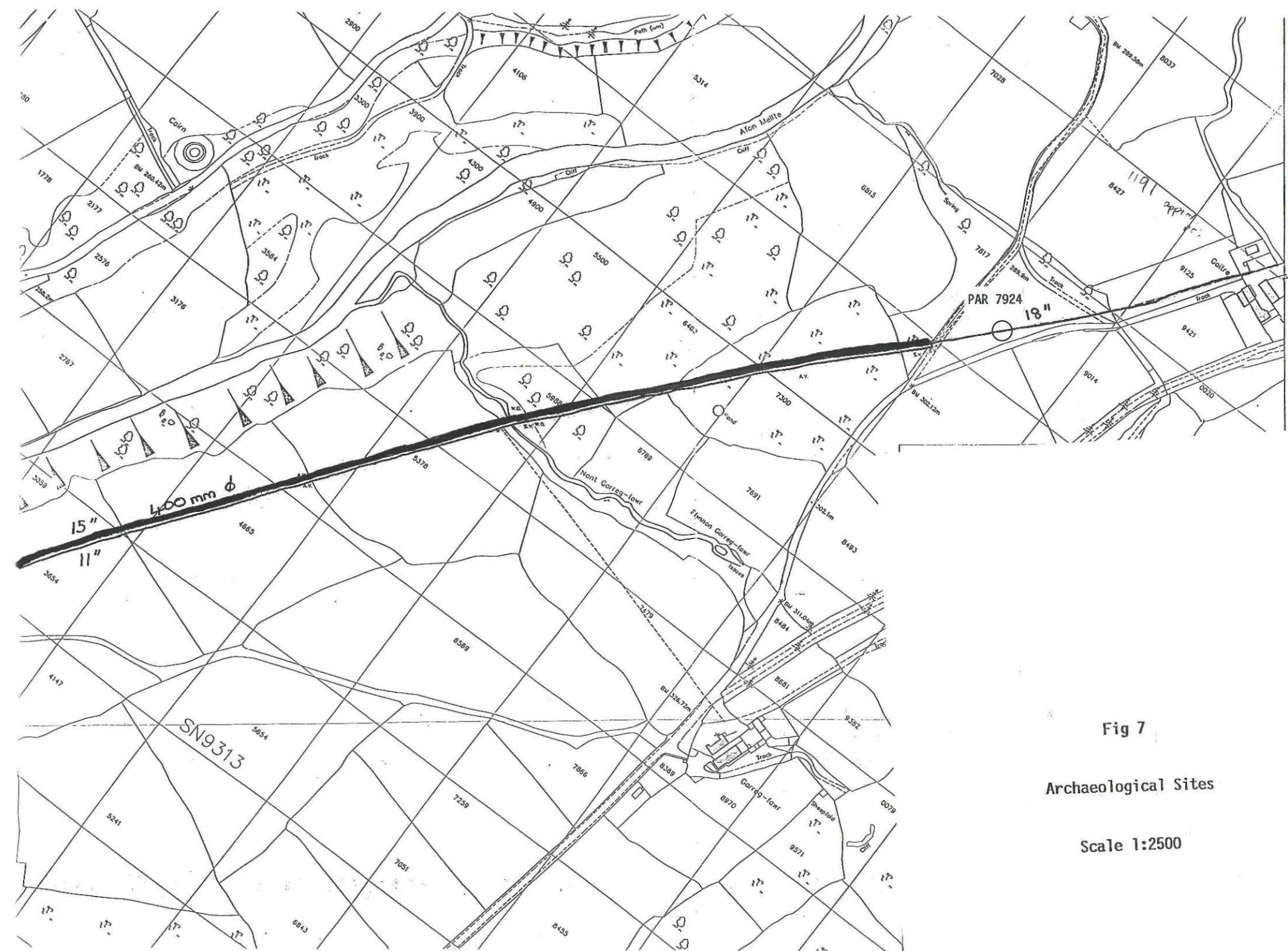












**Fig 7**

### Archaeological Sites

Scale 1:2500