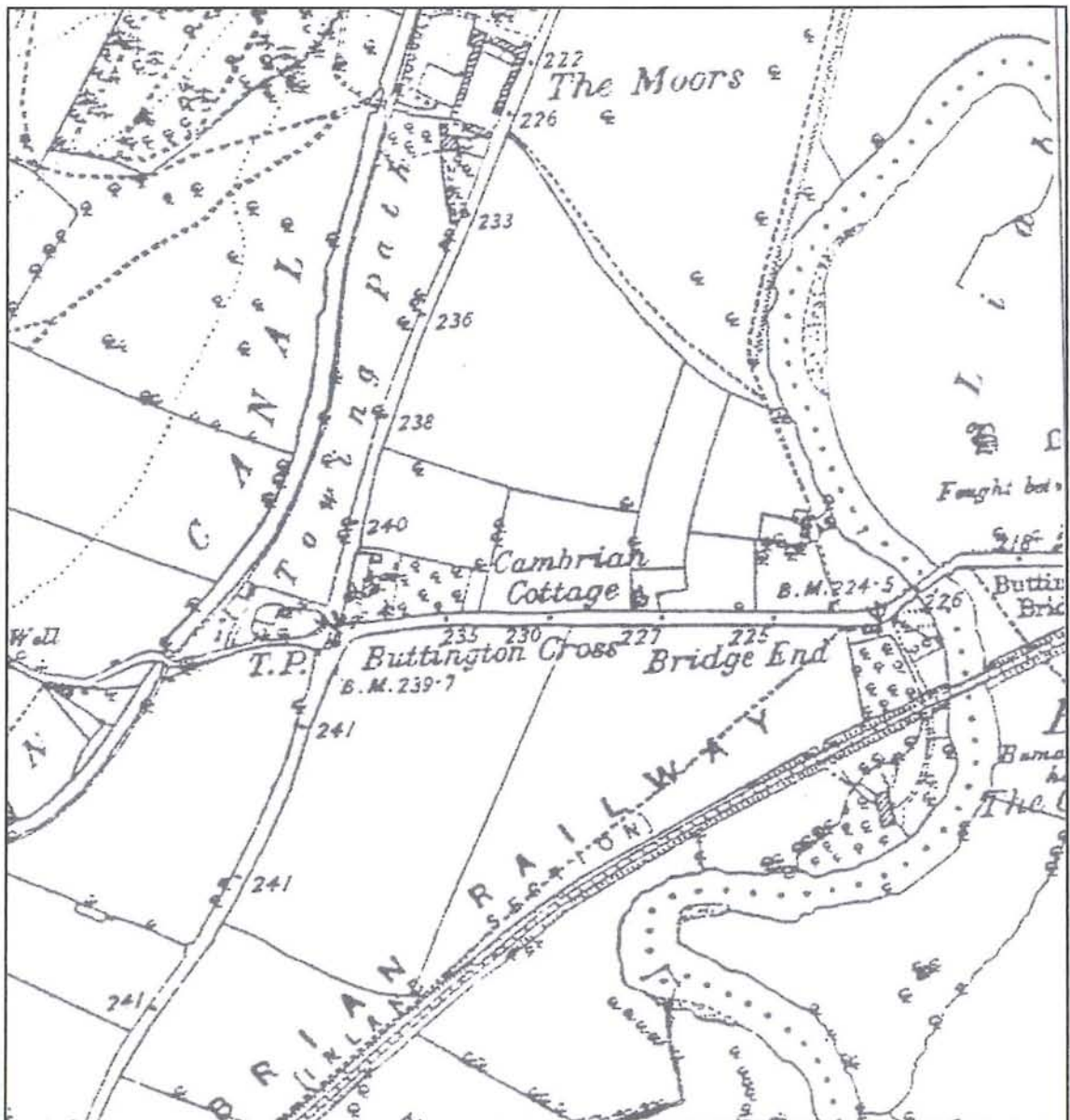


Proposed Development Site, Buttington Cross, Welshpool, Powys

DESK-BASED STUDY



Proposed Development Site, Buttington Cross, Welshpool, Powys

DESK-BASED STUDY

N Jones
December 2005

Report for J Ross Developments Ltd

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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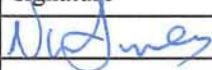
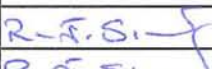
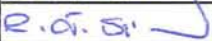
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2005 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr A R Jones of J Ross Developments Ltd to prepare a specification and quotation for undertaking an archaeological assessment of the site of a proposed development plot at Buttington Cross near Welshpool, Powys. The assessment was requested by the local authority on the advice of Mr M Walters of the CPAT Curatorial Section, acting in his capacity as archaeological curator for the region and archaeological advisor to the local authority, and was the subject of a brief drawn up by him (CPAT EVB 593).
- 1.2 The curatorial brief had specified a full programme of evaluation, including a desk-based study, geophysical survey and strategic trenching. However, following discussions between the client and the local planning authority CPAT Field Services was informed that an agreement had been reached whereby only the desk-based study would be undertaken as part of the application for outline planning permission. Subject to the success of this application, it was agreed that the building survey and field evaluation would then be undertaken at a later stage, as a condition of consent, and CPAT Field Services were instructed accordingly.
- 1.3 Accordingly, this report presents only the results from the desk-based study, as well as outlining further stages of work which would be required before full planning permission could be sought. A specification prepared by CPAT Field Services for undertaking these further stages is provided in Appendix 1.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The area of the assessment is located 1.9km north-east of Welshpool, occupying land off the A487/A458 Roundabout at Buttington Cross (Fig. 1; SJ 24300880). The proposed development occupies an arable field extending over 6.7ha and lying at approximately 70m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The solid geology of the area mainly consists of undivided Ludlow and Wenlock Series siltstones and mudstones belonging to the Silurian period, though there is some local faulting which has exposed Caradoc Series siltstones and mudstones of the Ordovician period (1994 British Geological Survey map). The soils of the area generally consist of fine silty and loamy soils belonging to the Denbigh 1 Association (1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map).

3 DESK-BASED STUDY

- 3.1 The desk-based study involved the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources for the immediate area. Repositories consulted included the following: the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held by CPAT at Welshpool; the National Monuments Record, maintained by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW) in Aberystwyth; the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth; and Powys County Archives in Llandrindod Wells.

Prehistoric period

- 3.2 Although there are no recorded prehistoric archaeological sites within the study area there is a potential for the survival of buried deposits of this period. Evidence from the wider area suggests that this part of the Severn Valley was extensively occupied during prehistory, particularly from the Neolithic onwards. To the north of the area there is evidence for later prehistoric farming in the form of a defended enclosure (PRN 7974), and in general sites of this

period as a whole are located on the river terrace above the floodplain, in a similar position to that of the proposed development.

Romano-British period

- 3.3 There is no evidence for any archaeological sites of this period within the vicinity of the study area.

Early medieval period

- 3.4 A series of slight earthworks (PRN 64074) and cropmarks (PRN 64073) on the east bank of the River Severn are thought to be part of Offa's Dyke, the 8th-century earthwork which is assumed to have formed the western boundary of the kingdom of Mercia. It has been conjectured that the line of the Dyke might originally have crossed the Severn and continued in the direction of the study area before following the west bank of the river northwards towards Four Crosses. However, an alternative view has been advanced that the Dyke either used the river as a natural boundary, and that as a consequence there was never an earthwork along this section, or that the course of the earthwork lay entirely on the eastern bank of the river.

Medieval period

- 3.5 There is no evidence for any archaeological sites of this period within the study area, although evidence from later mapping suggests that the area functioned as open-field arable land during the Middle Ages, one of several such areas around Welshpool in these centuries. Such open fields were farmed communally and lay close to the settlements whose people farmed them.

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.6 The earliest cartographic depiction of the development area at Buttington Cross that has been identified is on John Rocque's map of 1747, which could not be reproduced within this report for reasons of copyright. This shows the field, then much larger in area because it had not been truncated by the railway. It was termed Bridge Field Common and more information might have been provided by the schedule that was drawn up at the same time, but this can no longer be traced. Within the field a separate area was defined in the centre as 'The Duke's Land' (i.e land belonging to the Powis Estate) the drawing symbol used, hinting at the possibility that this was arable land under cultivation. Several buildings were shown in the vicinity, two sited at Buttington crossroads, opposite the study area and on either side of the road to Oswestry, and a third on the opposite, north side of the road to Shrewsbury close to the river.
- 3.7 Immediately to the east of the study area was a further small patch of ground which was not named, and the river, too, was depicted though with a much less pronounced meander than is present today or indeed as was shown on late 19th-century maps.
- 3.8 Several of the uncertainties that relate to Rocque's map are resolved in a map drawn up for the Earl of Powis in 1800, which also could not be reproduced within this report for reasons of copyright. This reveals in the accompanying schedule that the field was called Maes y Bont, an almost precise Welsh equivalent to the name used by Rocque, except that the latter seems to have transposed the terms 'Common' and 'Field'. This is clearly what the development area was, for even as late as the beginning of the 19th century some of the strips (or quilllets) were still in use, and originally in the medieval period the whole field would have been divided into strips and then grazed in common after the harvest by the stock of local farmers. Even as late as 1800 a few strips were still held by different owners, and those belonging to the Earl of Powis are shown individually, together with a central block - 'The Duke's Land' which the Earl of Powis had acquired and rationalised into a single holding which together with the strips covered in excess of 11 acres.
- 3.9 The 1800 map also shows the small patch of ground beside the river and on it a curious cross-shape which cannot be explained, but was seemingly not a building or church, although another map of much the same period appears to contradict this view. The meander in the river is as

exaggerated on the map as it was at the end of the 19th century, suggesting that Rocque's map was not as accurate as might have been anticipated.

- 3.10 In 1811 when the Teirtref Inclosure was being enacted, a map of the roads set out by the commissioners through and over the commons and waste lands shows that the little patch of ground between the field and the river was known as Buttington Green and that there was a private trackway running between it and the river.
- 3.11 Later maps add little to this picture. The Tithe map for Pool, Gungrog Fawr Township of 1840 (Fig. 2) reveals that the development area was part of Moors Farm and that some of the land was still called Maes y bont and some was under arable with some pasture and meadow.
- 3.12 The railway, which was opened in 1866 (Baughan 1991, 192-3), divided up the field into two rather unequal parts – it is the western large part that forms the development area, and other than a new boundary being introduced which divided it further into two by the end of the 19th century, it has remained largely unchanged since that time.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The results from the desk-based study have revealed no direct evidence for known archaeological sites within the study area, although the presence of important archaeological sites within the wider area around it may be significant. Most notably, the presence of a prehistoric or Romano-British enclosure and the possible line of Offa's Dyke suggest that related archaeological deposits may exist within the study area.
- 4.2 During the Middle Ages the development area clearly functioned as open-field arable land, one of several such areas around Welshpool in these centuries. It continued in this role up until the early 19th century, though the strips gradually disappeared as individual holdings were rationalised, and by 1840 it was under one ownership. There were some dwellings on adjacent blocks of land, but as far as the existing maps show, none in the development area. The open field was separated from the river by a narrow strip of land that acquired the name Buttington Green.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

- 5.1 As already indicated, the results contained within this report represent only the first stage of an archaeological investigation of the proposed development site at Buttington Cross. The curatorial brief (EVB 593) originally identified further phases of work to be undertaken at the pre-planning stage. Subject to an agreement between the client and the local authority these will now presumably be undertaken as a condition of outline planning permission, and are detailed below.
- 5.2 A programme of geophysical survey should be undertaken of the whole area using magnetic gradiometry.
- 5.3 A programme of field evaluation should be undertaken following the completion of the geophysical survey. This might consist of the trial excavation of a number of trenches, the number, size and position of which would be determined following discussions with the Curator after he has had an opportunity to assess the geophysics results.

- 5.4 The evaluation would be an essentially non-destructive process designed to promote the appropriate management of the archaeological resource within the framework of relevant planning permissions and would be designed to provide information on the nature, condition and significance of any archaeological deposits. However, sufficient information would have to be retrieved to assess the archaeological implications of the development and all features identified would be sufficiently sampled to provide information on dating, form, relationships and significance. The level of the natural subsoil would be tested in each of the evaluation trenches.
- 5.5 Following the completion of the field evaluation a report would be prepared detailing the results from the excavations. The report would include as a minimum: a summary, a description of the aims and methodology, the results of the field evaluation including any specialist reports, conclusions, recommendations for any further work, bibliography and appropriate appendices.
- 5.6 Depending on the results from the field evaluation a further stage of archaeological work might be required either before or during the construction phase of the development. An absence of significant archaeological deposits during the field evaluation would not be taken to indicate that the development area as a whole was devoid of such features.
- 5.7 There would need to be a commitment on the part of the developer to the full publication of the results in an appropriate journal once all archaeological works in connection with the development have been completed. The site archive would be deposited with the Regional Historic Environment Record and all artefacts would be deposited with an appropriate museum, which in this instance is likely to be the Powysland Museum in Welshpool.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1 The writers would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the project: Bob Silvester, CPAT; the staff of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

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Cartographic sources

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- 1811 Teirtref Inclosure. 'A Map of the Roads and Ways set out and appointed by the commissioners through and over the commons and waste lands...' *NLW/Powis Castle/M259*.
- 1840 Tithe Map and Apportionment for Pool, Gungrog Fawr Township.
- 1891 1st edition 1:10560 Ordnance Survey map Montgomeryshire 23NE.

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map (Sheet 2 - Wales) and Legend (1:250,000 scale).

1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition at 1:250,000 scale).

Aerial photographs

RAF/106G/UK 1698/5046 and 5050. 27/08/1946

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION FOR FIELD EVALUATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has been invited to prepare a specification of works for undertaking an archaeological assessment in connection with proposals to construct a new livestock market on land off the A487/A458 Roundabout at Buttington Cross, Welshpool, Powys. The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, have determined that an archaeological assessment should be undertaken to assess the potential impact of the proposals on the archaeological resource.
- 1.2 A desk-based study of the area has revealed no known archaeological sites within the area of the proposed development, although there is the potential for unrecorded archaeology within the site. The course of Offa's Dyke in this area has not been confirmed and it is possible that the Dyke runs close to, or within the site. In addition, evidence from other sites close to the River Severn near Welshpool might suggest that there is a potential for buried archaeological deposits of other periods, particularly relating to Bronze Age and Romano-British occupation.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the assessment are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of a geophysical survey and field evaluation, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeological deposits identified during the field evaluation;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the assessment, incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the future management of the archaeology.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Stage one will consist of a detailed magnetometer survey of the area, based on 30m grids, with readings taken at 1m centres in traverses 0.5m apart. The survey will be sub-contracted to be undertaken by Stratascan, an experienced and well respected organisation under the directorship of Peter Barker.
- 3.2 At this stage it is not possible to determine the potential requirements for strategic trial trenching and a decision will only be reached following the completion of stages one and two and discussions with the curator and client. Once this has been agreed a costed proposal will be submitted.
- 3.3 All excavations will be undertaken using a machine excavator with a toothless bucket to remove modern overburden down to the level of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation will be conducted by hand unless otherwise agreed with the Curator in advance. The evaluation will be entirely non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survive, together with their nature condition and significance. The depth of natural deposits will be determined to assess the extent of any stratified deposits which may be encountered.

- 3.4 It has been assumed that the area in question has sufficient access for a JCB or other mechanical excavator. Excavated material will be temporarily stored adjacent to the trench, which will be reinstated with this material upon completion. No provision has been made for stripping or relaying any surfaced areas, or for fencing the trenches during the excavation.
- 3.5 Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in 35mm format black and white print and colour slide. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to buildings and boundaries identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps and levels will be related to Ordnance Datum where possible, with the use of total station surveying.
- 3.6 All artefacts will be related to their contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff.
- 3.7 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared in A4 format, containing conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Archaeological Background; Evaluation; Conclusions and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.8 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), to be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record (HER). All artefacts will, subject to the permission of the owner, be deposited with Powysland Museum, Welshpool.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The assessment will be undertaken by a small team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Mr R J Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). CPAT is an IFA Registered Organisation.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that the geophysical survey will be completed within 7 days. The report will be completed within 2 weeks of the completion of on-site works. A draft copy of the results will be forwarded to the Client and Curator to enable a decision to be made regarding any requirements for strategic trial trenching. Copies of the final report will provided to the client and the Regional HER. The Curator will be informed of the timetable in order to arrange for monitoring if required.
- 4.4 The following contingency sums have been allowed in accordance with section 10 of the curatorial brief, dependent on the requirements for strategic trial trenching. The need for such contingencies, and their potential cost, would be subject to discussions between CPAT, the client and the curator once the fieldwork has been completed. The following figures are therefore only for guidance and the final cost, should any of the services be required, may be more or less than the estimates provided.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Curatorial monitoring | £50 per visit |
| Finds conservation etc | £200 |
| Dating | £300 |
| Environmental sampling | £200 |
| Museum deposition and storage | £50 |
| Interim publication | <i>Archaeology in Wales</i> at no additional charge |

- 4.5 There is a commitment to the full publication of the results in an appropriate journal once all archaeological works in connection with the development have been completed.
- 4.6 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.

4.7 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W. Jones

24 October 2005

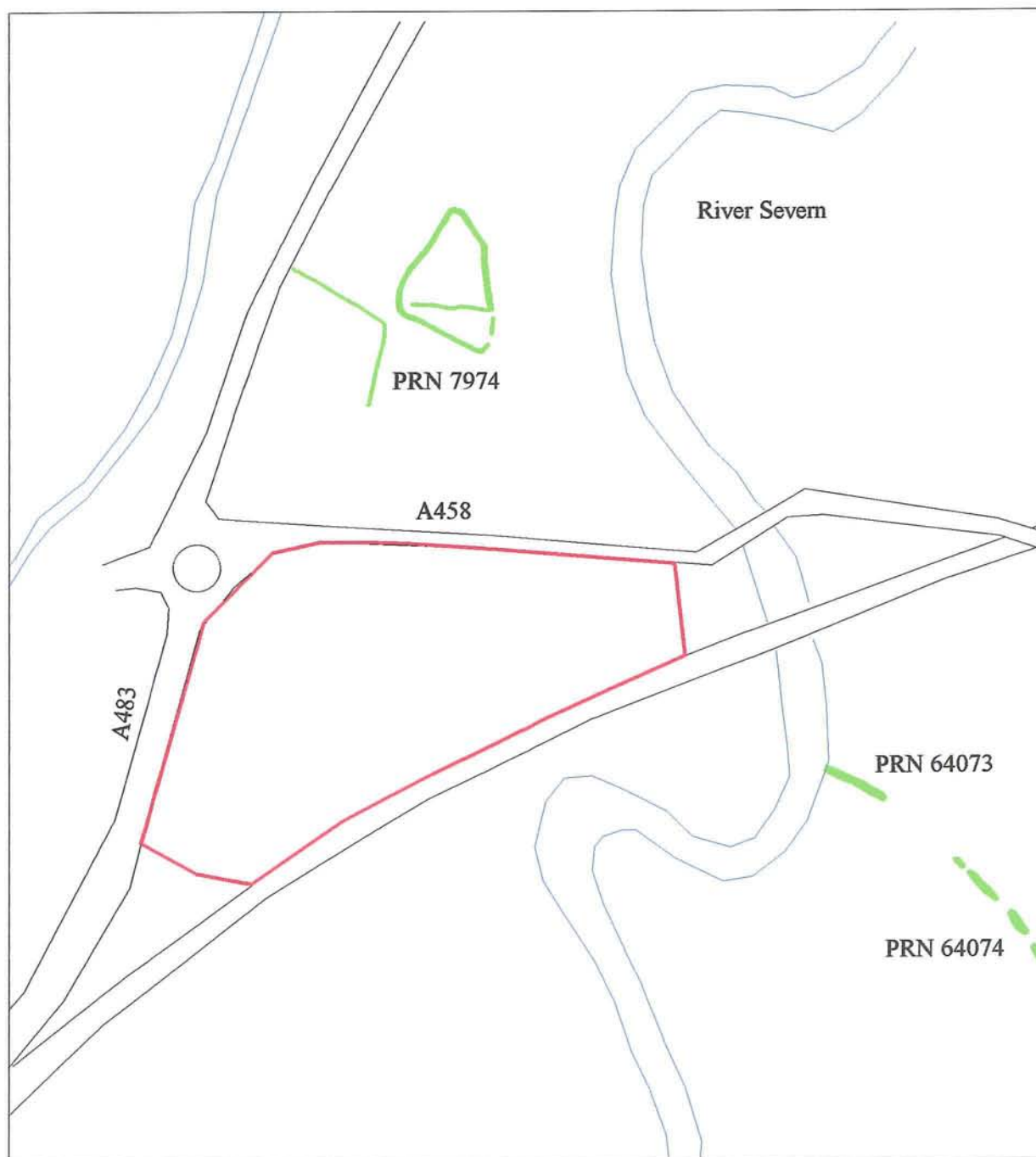


Fig. 1 Study area and known archaeological sites, scale 1:5,000

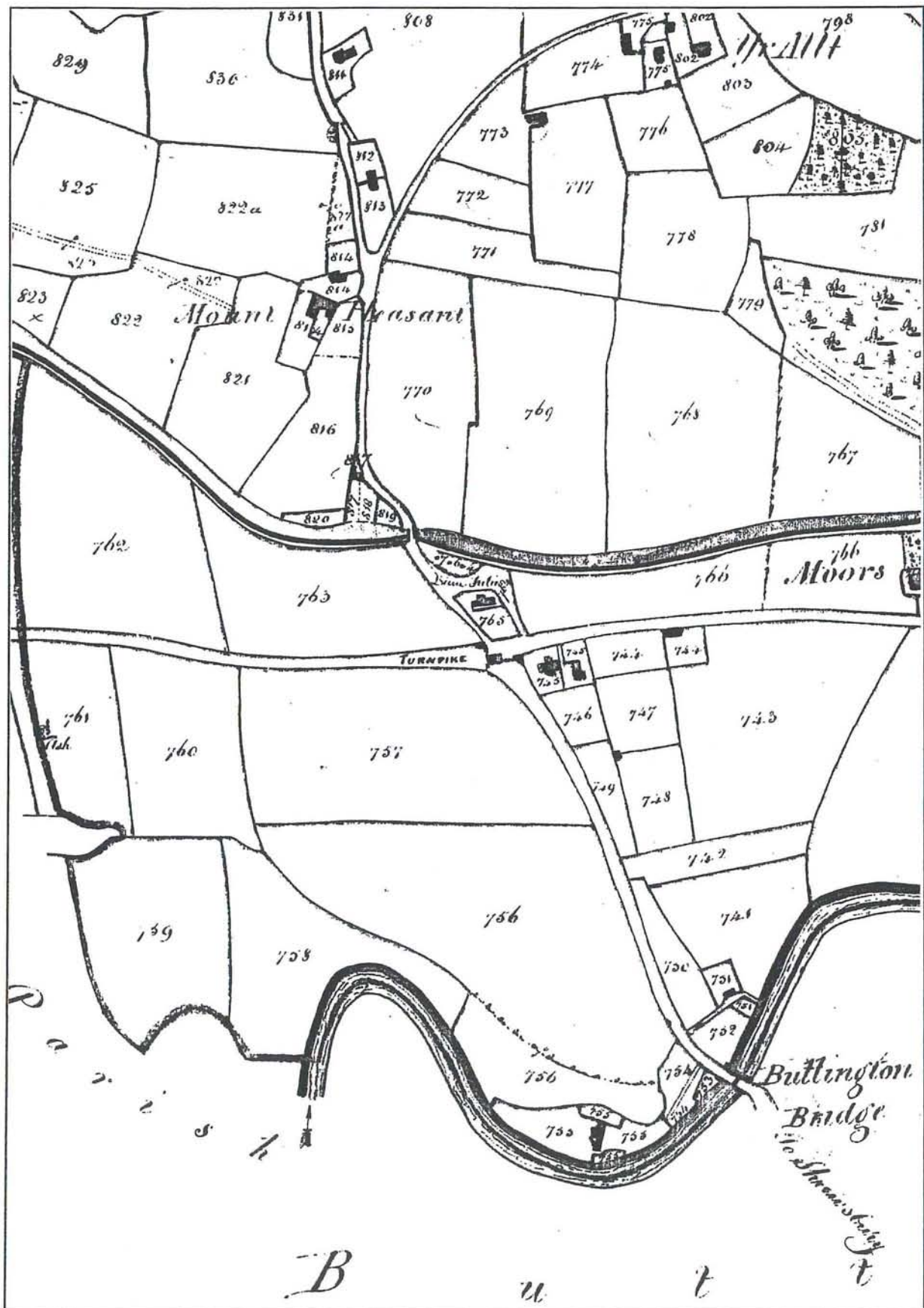


Fig. 2 Tithe Survey for Pool, Gungrog Fawr Township, 1840

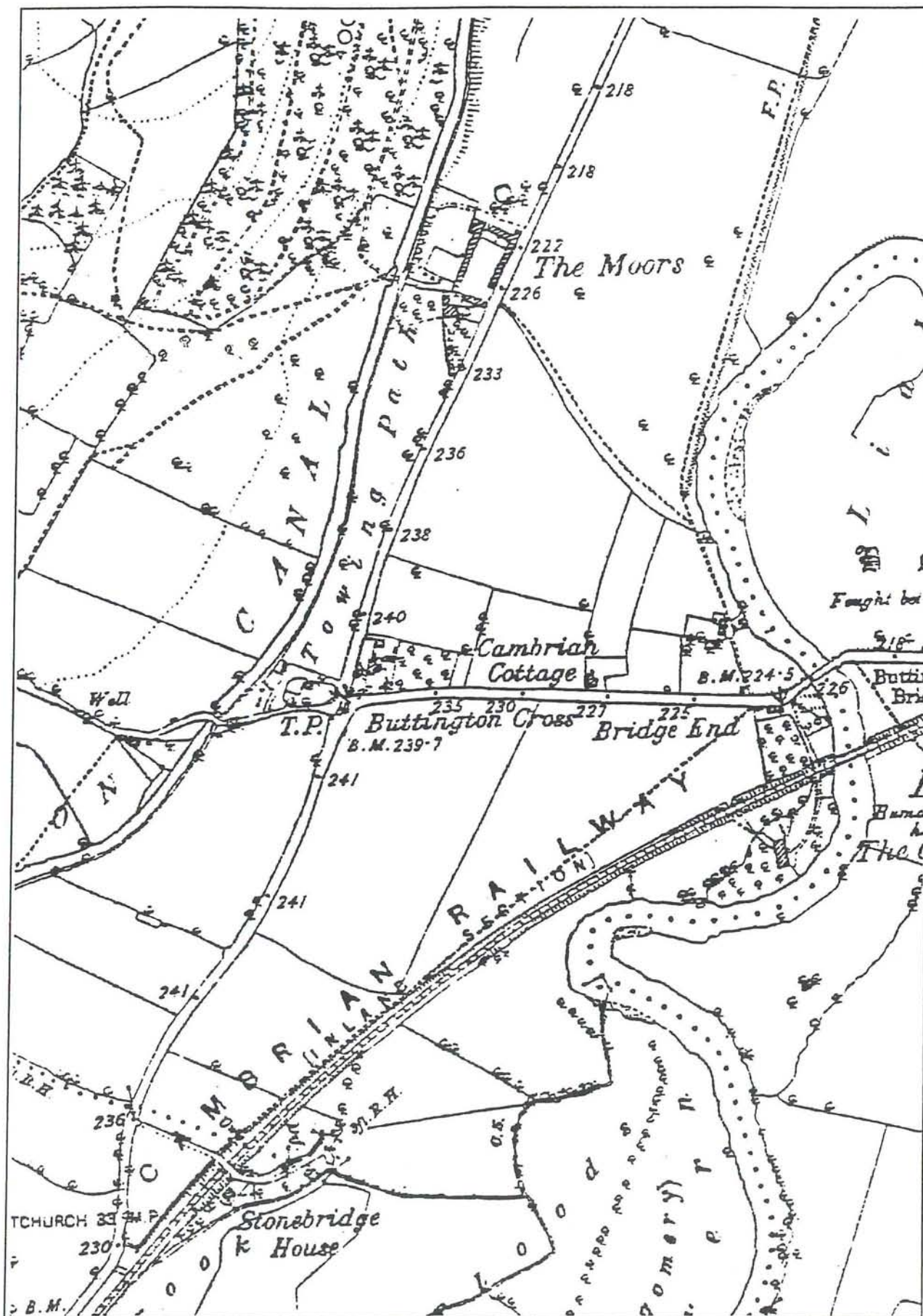


Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:10,560 (enlarged) Montgomeryshire 23NE, 1891.