

CPAT Report No 1049

Aberhafesp pipeline, Newtown, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Aberhafesp Pipeline, Newtown, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

R Hankinson

July 2010

Report for Severn Trent Water



C P A T

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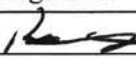

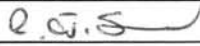
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 2010 the Field Services section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (hereafter CPAT) was commissioned by Hyder Consulting on behalf of Severn Trent Water to undertake a watching brief during works associated with the installation of a pipeline between the villages of Caersws (SO 0374 9266) and Aberhafesp (SO 0681 9246), between 2.5km and 6km to the west of Newtown in northern Powys.
- 1.2 An earlier proposed course of the pipeline, together with its associated pumping station, was the subject of an archaeological assessment (Jones 2005). It appears, however, that these proposals were altered at a later date to incorporate a link to the sewage treatment works on the outskirts of Caersws, which seems to have negated the requirement for the pumping station. The watching brief was carried out as a result of a request to Severn-Trent Water by Mr M Walters of the Curatorial Section of CPAT, acting in his capacity as the regional archaeological curator.
- 1.3 The installation work was carried out during May, June and July 2010, with occasional visits undertaken by CPAT to examine archaeologically sensitive areas, in consultation with site representatives of the pipeline installation contractors, McPhillips. This report was compiled on the completion of the site work.

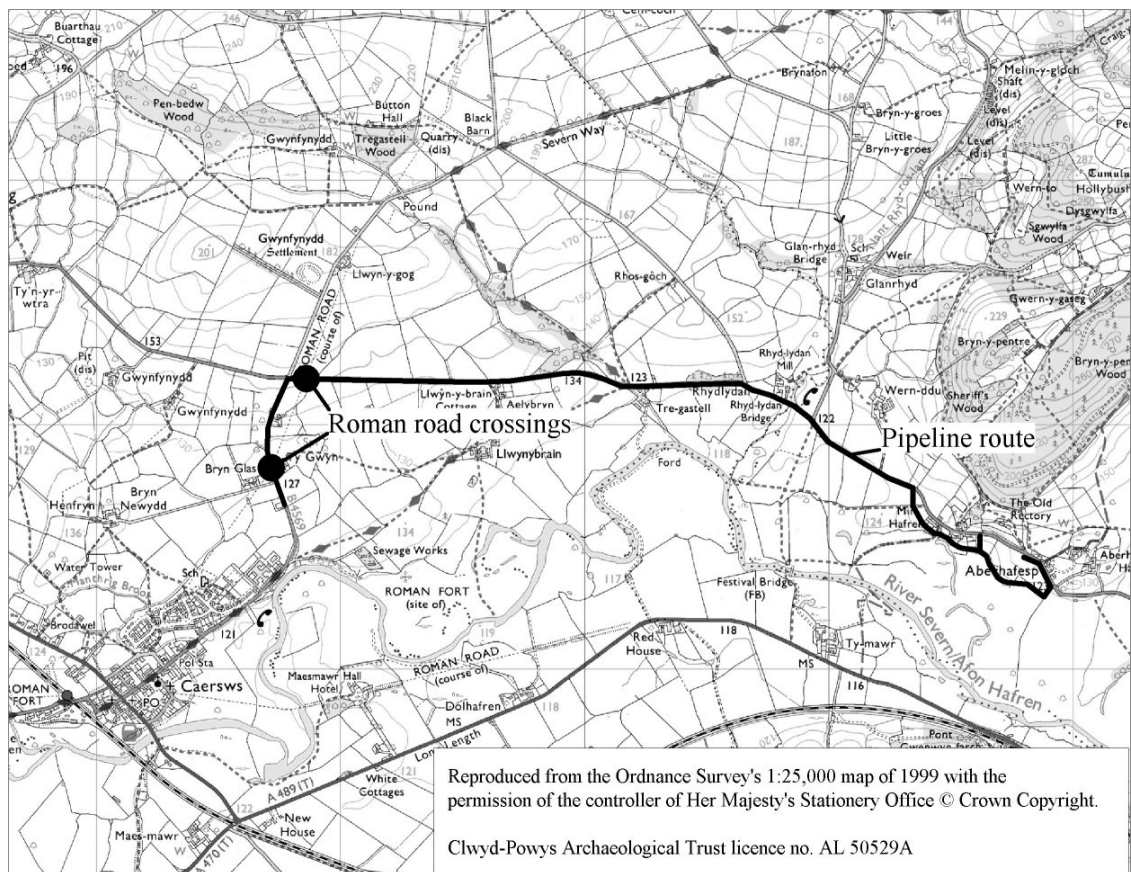


Fig. 1 Pipeline route

2 LOCATION

- 2.1 The pipeline runs for approximately 4.25km, north from the Caersws sewage treatment works to the crossroads at SO 0378 9318, where the minor road from Caersws meets the B4568. It then continues along this road in a general easterly direction to SO 0562 9316, where it bends to the south-east and continues within the road corridor to SO 0634 9275. Beyond this point the pipeline leaves the road and heads generally south-east as far as NGR SO 0688 9230, where it turns north-east to SO 0691 9234 and then north-west to its end at SO 0680 9246 on the side of the B4568 as it passes through Aberhafesp (see Fig. 1).
- 2.2 The route lies entirely upon the valley floor of the River Severn, much of it being between 120m OD and 130m OD in elevation, and is generally positioned well above the flood plain. It does, however, descend down nearly to river level at the eastern end, where it drops to 115m OD before ascending a short slope.
- 2.3 The village of Aberhafesp is situated beside the B4568, 4km west of Newtown. The Church and Hall occupy the lower northern slopes of the Severn Valley, facing each other across the Aberhafesp Brook. The road runs below and to the south of these properties and follows the edge of a river terrace.
- 2.4 The underlying geology of the pipeline route is Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone, with river alluvium on the flood plain. Soils consist of well drained loam and silt of the Denbigh 1 Association, with deep silty soils of the Teme Association over the alluvium (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

3 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1 The methodology employed during the watching brief was governed by the nature of the excavations, much of the route being within the carriageway of the B4568 where the pipe trench was excavated by a narrow trenching machine such that it was only in the order of 200mm in width. It proved impossible to determine whether any unknown sub-surface features were encountered with this type of machining, which led to the focus of the watching brief on the sections of topsoiled wayleave around Aberhafesp village and on the two places where the narrow trench was due to cross the route of a known Roman road (RR 642).
- 3.2 No evidence of any archaeological features were revealed in the topsoiled areas on the south side of the road through Aberhafesp, despite a thorough search. The soil heaps were also examined for significant finds, but the only material encountered was of post-medieval origin. The eastern end of the pipeline lies in fairly close proximity to the Pentre Round Barrow (PRN 4022), which has been identified from aerial photographs, but no material related to this prehistoric feature was observed.
- 3.3 The Roman road RR 642, whose alignment crosses the western end of the pipeline route, is well-known and displays relatively intact sections as it ascends the side of the Severn Valley, on its way to a Roman fort near Bala. Some of these sections have been excavated in the past (Hankinson 2006), revealing traces of a stone-edged road surface about 4.9m in width with flanking ditches which would have given an overall width of about 7.0m. Given the depth of the modern road makeup, it is unlikely that conclusive evidence would have been discernible in the very narrow trench (see 3.1, above) used for pipe installation, but difficulties with the timing of the watching brief meant that it proved impossible to view either of the two locations where the modern road was believed to cross the Roman road alignment. There is, however, little doubt

that the route of the Roman road is accurately delineated owing to its physical presence in nearby fields.



Plate 1: Section of topsoiled wayleave on the edge of Aberhafesp village, from south-east
(Photo CPAT 3119-0002)

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 No unrecorded archaeological features or significant finds were revealed by the topsoil stripping in the vicinity of Aberhafesp village.
- 4.2 The remainder of the route followed the course of the modern B4568 and its adjoining minor road leading to Caersws, where pipeline installation was by means of a very narrow trench in the road which would have made continuous observation an unprofitable exercise. Unfortunately, it proved impossible to examine the two locations where the pipeline crossed the alignment of a known Roman road, although how much evidence might have been discernible at these locations is debateable. The extent to which the Roman road has been disturbed by modern road construction therefore remains unknown.
- 4.3 As far as can be ascertained, given the restricted nature of the excavations and watching brief, no significant archaeological features were affected by the pipeline installation.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 5.1 The writer would like to thank Mr M Charles of the site contractors, McPhillips, for his help and assistance during the project.

6 REFERENCES

Sources

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