

CPAT Report No. 1338


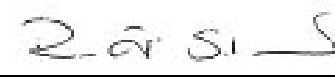
Pen-y-Bryn, Abergwyngregyn, Gwynedd

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL CLWYD-POWYS
CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Summary

A watching brief was conducted in two stages during groundworks relating to the replacement of an existing watermain by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. An initial phase of test pitting was conducted to locate the existing watermain, which crosses the scheduled area of Garth Celyn (SAM CN218), which it has been suggested was the site of a 13th-century *llys* associated with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. However, a high-status structure, associated with 13th- and 14th-century material, has also been found in the valley bottom, on the other side of the river and offers an alternative location for the *llys*.

The limited groundworks within the scheduled area produced no evidence of archaeological features or deposits, although a bronze ring, thought to be of Roman date, was reported by the land owner as having been recovered from the excavation spoil. A second ring, of similar date, was also later reported in similar circumstances.

The excavation trench for the new water main crossed a prominent earthwork terrace close to the river which had previously been interpreted as a Roman road. The trench provided the opportunity to examine a cross-section of the terrace, which was composed of several layers of stone which were evidently part of a road which had seen various episodes of repair. Several sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from a deposit sealed beneath the road, disproving its Roman origin. Consultation of early 19th-century maps demonstrates that the road was part of Telford's London to Holyhead route, which was later replaced by a new road, the old A5, by-passing the village of Abergwyngregyn.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust were invited by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water in May 2013 to undertake a programme of archaeological recording relating to the replacement of an existing water supply on land adjacent to Pen-y-Bryn, Abergwyngregyn, Gwynedd (SH 658 727).
- 1.2 The archaeological interest in the site focuses on an area of rough pasture and gardens associated with Pen-y-Bryn, which is statutorily protected as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM CN218). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Appendix 1) was produced in support of an application for scheduled monument consent for groundworks within the area of SAM CN218, and this was granted by Cadw in June 2013 with the following conditions:
1. *that Cadw shall be given at least two weeks notice, in writing, of the date of the commencement of the work or of any subsequent adjustment to this date, to allow Cadw's representatives to monitor on site activity;*
 2. *that access to the site shall be afforded to representatives of Cadw;*
 3. *that all of the works shall be undertaken as per the detailed specification submitted with the application and that any deviation from the specification shall be agreed with Cadw prior to being undertaken;*
 4. *that during Phase I of the works (excavation of trial pits) the minimum number of trial pits shall be excavated to provide sufficient information to inform Phase II (excavation of pipe trench);*
 5. *that following completion of Phase I a meeting shall be held with Cadw representatives to discuss in detail the results of the test pit excavations and agree the specification for Phase II of the works;*
 6. *that Phase II of the works shall not commence until the applicant has submitted a detailed plan of the proposed route of the trench and the proposed route shall minimise disturbance within the scheduled area and be informed by the results of the trial pit excavations;*
 7. *that during the course of the excavation and investigation works, Cadw shall be kept informed of any developments on site and that at least one on-site monitoring meeting is held between the contractor/contract archaeologist and Cadw, in order to review progress. It is the responsibility of the applicant to minute the on-site meeting (using the Cadw template provided) and to circulate written minutes from the meeting within two weeks of the meeting having taken place;*
 8. *that any additional elements of excavation and investigation works not agreed in the specification will be discussed and agreed at these meetings. A methodology for these additional works shall be agreed on site and detailed in the meeting minutes;*
 9. *that as per the specification, vehicle access within the scheduled area shall be restricted;*

10. *that all excavated material shall be used to infill the excavation areas and any excess shall be removed from the scheduled area;*
 11. *that representatives from Cadw shall be afforded access to the site to monitor the progress of the works and carry out site inspections as necessary;*
 12. *that the applicant shall ensure that all on-site contractors and staff are made fully aware that the area of works form part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument that is protected from damage under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act,1979;*
 13. *that the archaeologist shall submit a full and detailed digital report of the results of the excavation and investigation work to Cadw within 1 month of the work having been completed. A digital copy of the final report shall also be sent for inclusion on the Historic Environment Records database held by the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust;*
 14. *that the site shall be left in a stable and tidy condition upon completion of the work.*
 15. *that Cadw shall be informed in writing immediately upon the completion of the works (notification via email is acceptable).*
- 1.3 The scheme of works consisted of two phases, initially involving two trial pits (Fig. 01 TP1 and associated trench and TP 2) positioned to determine the location of the existing water main. Trial pit 1 was initially excavated by hand and subsequently both the pit and trench were thereafter excavated by machine. Trial pit 2 was also excavated by machine followed by the further excavation of a narrow trench to accommodate the new watermain, which was subject to a watching brief
- 1.4 All work within the scheduled area was monitored by Cadw, while for the excavations elsewhere the curatorial responsibility lay with Snowdonia National Park Authority, whose agreement was sought regarding any site methodology.
- 1.5 During the watching brief and excavations a written, drawn and photographic record was maintained, in accordance with the CIfA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (2014).

2 Trial Pits

- 2.1 Trial pit 1 was located on the northern perimeter of the scheduled area, west of the Pen-y-Bryn access road (Fig. 01 and 02). Initially a small, 1.3m by 0.9m, trial hole was excavated by hand. Once the watermain valve had been located (at a depth of 0.2m) the trench was extended westwards for a further 1.7m by 4.8m up to a depth of 0.7m, at which depth a 6cm diameter water pipe was located. The undisturbed soil deposits within the proximity of the service trench consisted of an orange brown clayey silt with flecks of coal and small rounded stones. The earlier service trench back-fill consisted of similar re-deposited material together with larger rounded cobbles (presumed to be the remnants of an adjacent field boundary).



Fig. 02 Trial Pit 1, viewed from the south-east. Photo CPAT 3966-0006

- 2.2 After locating the water pipe, a trial trench (0.5m wide and 0.6m deep) was machine-excavated in a south-westerly direction for a further 33m in search of a mains connection. However, no further water mains connection was found and therefore the trial excavations were abandoned in favour of further trial pit investigations (Fig. 01 TP2) in the field below Pen-y-Bryn, to the north-west. Throughout the groundworks the excavation remained within the backfill of the earlier trench. Apart from an electrical cable recorded at a point 24.7m along the trench, no features of significance were revealed during the investigations. The cable, orientated north-west to south-east, clearly demonstrates that other, previously unrecorded, ground interventions have been undertaken at Pen-y-Bryn in the latter part of the 20th century.
- 2.3 Although the limited groundworks within the scheduled area produced no evidence of any archaeological features or deposits, a bronze ring, thought to be of Roman date together with an 18th-century Irish Halfpenny, were reported by the land owner (Mrs Katherine Gibson) as having been recovered from the excavation spoil. A second ring, of similar date, was also reported later in similar circumstances. Detailed reports and

photographs, undertaken by Jeff Spencer, Historic Environment Record Officer at CPAT, can be found in Appendices 2 and 3 of this report.

- 2.4 The second trial pit (TP2, Figs. 01 and 03), was located directly above a known service chamber. Therefore all of the excavated deposits consisted of re-deposited material. The purpose of the excavation was to determine in which direction the new water-main should be installed. Subsequently the scheme was re-designed to install the service north-eastwards across the lower field, connecting to an alternative main that ran along the northern boundary. As with the second trial pit (TP2), the excavations that followed were not in the scheduled area and therefore curatorial responsibility lay with Snowdonia National Park Authority. The subsequent groundworks are viewed as the second phase of the proposed scheme of works and are reported in the following section.



Fig. 03 Trial Pit 2, viewed from the south-west. Photo CPAT 3966-0019

3 Watching brief

- 3.1 The deposits within the machine-excavated pipe trench (1.2m wide and between 0.75m – 0.8m deep) consisted of natural undisturbed subsoil (river gravel), sealed by plough-soil: very fine grey brown silty clay (0.35m) and a firmer buff/brown silty sand (0.15m thick) overlain with topsoil (0.25m thick). At a point 8m along the trench (Fig. 01 'A') a glacial boulder stream of large river-rounded stone was encountered at a depth of 0.4m. Sealing the stones was a thin (50mm) lense of wood charcoal and cockle shells, which appeared to be part of a midden (pit), located 3m to the north-east (Fig. 01 'B'). Fragments of coal and late 19th-century pottery were present within.
- 3.2 At a point beyond these features an alteration to the planned route of the excavation presented an opportunity to record a section across an embanked causeway, which traversed the field north-east to south-west. The causeway, believed to be the remains

of an 18th to 19th century turnpike road, is approximately 11m wide and, when viewed from the north-west, nearly 0.6m high.



Fig. 04 Location of rubbish pit 'B', viewed from the north-east. Photo CPAT 3966-0025



Fig. 05 Detailed view of rubbish pit 'B'. Photo CPAT 3966-0024

- 3.3 The section (Fig. 01 C-D and Figs 06 – 07) revealed road construction material up to 0.7m in height that consisted of at least two phases of build. The original basal deposit, a fine, compact, pea-gritted sand (12) overlay a ploughsoil deposit (13) from which several

sherds of late 18th or 19th century pottery were recovered. This was covered with a metallated road surface consisting of small pebbles set into a firm pink/orange clay. The clay had evidently been imported as no similar deposit was encountered during the investigations. Along the north-eastern edge of the road there were indications of a thick flood deposit (10) of light greenish grey sand. Overlying both deposits (10) and (11) was another road deposit (considered to be the second phase of build). Of firm, iron-panned sand (09), it was sealed by another metallated road surface (08) up to 5.6m wide. The road material, constructed with quarried stone and shale, differed considerably from the original road surface (11).

- 3.4 Along the southern edge of the road there was, within the sequence of events, another thick accumulation of hillwash or flood material (05). It was the encroachment of this deposit that probably initiated a further, and final, construction of the road surface (04) up to 10m wide. The surface, constructed from rounded cobbles and pebbles, appeared heavily worn with evidence of wheelruts and possibly, with the decline of the turnpike, much later plough damage.



Fig. 06 North-east facing section through the 19th-century turnpike road. Photo CPAT 3966-0030



Fig. 07 Detailed view of turnpike road construction material. Photo CPAT 3966-0037

- 3.5 No further archaeological features were encountered during the final phases of excavation and thus the watching brief at Pen-y-Bryn was concluded.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1 The trial pit phase of the groundworks, in both the scheduled and unscheduled areas, identified the line of previous service excavations together with additional previously unrecorded, ground interventions (electrical cable supplies). The cable certainly traverses the scheduled area at Pen-y-Bryn.
- 4.2 The excavations in both areas produced no further evidence for significant archaeological features or deposits. The midden deposits recorded in the line of the new water main are of 19th-century origin and are therefore of relatively little archaeological significance. Two bronze rings, thought to be of Roman date and reported by the land owner as having been recovered from the excavation spoil, must have been found in modern topsoil deposits or previously excavated service material rather than in undisturbed archaeological strata. It is difficult, therefore, to interpret the nature of their deposition.
- 4.3 Where the excavation trench for the new water main crossed a prominent earthwork terrace, (held by popular belief to be a Roman road) a cross-section of the terrace revealed several layers of stone which were evidently part of a road which had seen various episodes of repair. Deposits recorded either side of the road strongly suggested the ongoing repairs and modifications could be the result of flood and erosion events. Several sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from sealed deposits within and below the road make-up, thus disproving its proposed Roman origin. Comparisons with early 19th-century maps also demonstrates that the road was part of Telford's London to Holyhead route, which was later replaced by a new road, the old A5, by-passing the village of Abergwyngregyn.

5 Acknowledgements

- 5.1 CPAT would like to thank Mr Simon Jones and Mr Steve Ware, Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water); John Roberts, Archaeologist Snowdonia National Park; Ian Halfpenney and Adele Thackray, Cadw, for their support throughout the project. Fieldwork was undertaken by Ian Grant and Sophie Watson, CPAT with groundworks assistance from Mulcair Civil Engineering. Post-excavation assessment and reporting has been undertaken by Ian Grant with illustrative assistance from Nigel Jones and Sophie Watson. Finally the author would like to thank Mrs Katherine Gibson of Pen-y-Bryn for her warm welcome, interest and co-operation throughout the archaeological investigations.

6 Sources

Ordnance Surveyor's Drawing 1822, Conwy, No. 312

Davidson, A., Hopewell, D., McGuinness, N. and Smith, S.G. 2014. *Medieval and Post-medieval Roads in North-West Wales. Report on scheduling enhancement study. Part 1: Report and gazetteer.* Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 1171.

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 1338

**Pen-y-Bryn, Abergwyngregyn
Scheduled Ancient Monument CN218**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Written Scheme of Investigation

submitted by

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

On behalf of

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting as archaeological consultants for Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, have produced this Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) in support of an application for scheduled monument consent for groundworks within the area of SAM CN218 at Pen-y-bryn, Abergwyngregyn, in Gwynedd (SH658727). The works relate to the replacement of an existing water supply and will be conducted in two phases. An overall plan showing the proposed scheme of works is provided in Fig. 1.

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The excavations will be conducted entirely by hand and will extend to the surface of undisturbed natural subsoils, or bedrock, to ensure the preservation by record of any archaeological features, deposits or artefacts which may be present. Cadw will be informed of the timetable in order to facilitate monitoring and will be contacted immediately should any significant archaeology be revealed.

Phase 1

- 2.2 The initial phase of work will consist of the excavation of 1m x 1m trial pits in order to determine the location and route of the existing water main. The location of the pits will be determined by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. The turf will be removed carefully and all spoil will be placed on a suitable membrane for subsequent reinstatement. Initial excavations will be conducted by experienced CPAT staff under archaeological conditions, although deeper excavations may subsequently be conducted using a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision to ensure that no additional areas are disturbed.

Phase 2

- 2.3 The exact requirements for the new connection will be dependent on the results from the trial pits but will necessitate the excavation of a trench for a new connection which may be outside, or partly inside the scheduled area. Any excavations within the scheduled area will adhere to the following procedure. The turf will be removed carefully and all spoil will be placed adjacent to the trench for subsequent reinstatement. Initial hand excavations will be conducted by experienced CPAT staff under archaeological conditions, although deeper excavations may subsequently be conducted using a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision to ensure that no additional areas are disturbed. The width of the new service trench has yet to be determined but within the scheduled area this should be sufficient to allow meaningful archaeological investigations to take place, being at least 0.5m wide for the depth of hand excavations, although deeper, machine excavations, could be at a reduced width.
- 2.4 Excavations outside the scheduled area are likely to be largely along an existing track and may be undertaken as a controlled watching brief with the facility for appropriate excavation and recording of any significant archaeological features, deposits or finds which may be revealed. The Snowdonia National Park Authority will be informed of works not subject to scheduled monument consent and their agreement sought regarding the methodology.

- Mitigation summary for SAM CN218
- No vehicular access within or across the scheduled area without prior consent.
- No positioning or operation of machinery within a scheduled area without prior consent.
- No storage of equipment or materials within a scheduled area.
- Archaeological excavations to be conducted under archaeological conditions by an IfA Registered Organisation.
- All spoil to be placed on a suitable membrane for later reinstatement or removal.
- All contractors to be made aware of the protected status of the monuments and the restrictions that this status imposes.
- Cadw to be provided with a method statement in advance of the works commencing.
- Cadw to be kept informed of the work programme to facilitate monitoring.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The excavations will be conducted according to the Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).
- 3.2 Excavations will be conducted by hand and will extend to the surface of the natural subsoil, or a depth at which there is no potential for further archaeological discoveries. Thereafter, should the excavations need to extend to a greater depth this will be undertaken by a small mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision.
- 3.3 Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms and be drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography will be in digital format to a minimum resolution of 6 mega pixels. All features will be located as accurately as possible with respect to boundaries identified on modern Ordnance Survey maps with the use of total station surveying.
- 3.4 All artefacts will be related to the contexts from which they were derived and treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and will be processed by trained CPAT staff.
- 3.5 Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Archaeological Background; Evaluation; Conclusions and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.6 The site archive will be prepared to specifications in English Heritage's Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) system and the IfA *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2008), to be deposited with the regional Historic Environment Record (HER).

4 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

- 4.1 The excavation and monitoring will be undertaken by a team of skilled archaeologists under the overall supervision of Dr R J Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). CPAT is also an IfA Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2010) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2008).
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the assessment. Copies of the report will be provided to Cadw, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, Snowdonia National Park Authority and the regional Historic Environment Record maintained by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.
- 4.3 Cadw will act as archaeological curator within the scheduled ancient monument, while any work outside the scheduled area will be curated by the SNPA Archaeologist. Both parties will be kept informed of the work programme and progress in order to facilitate monitoring should this be required.
- 4.4 The client should be aware that in the event that significant archaeological remains are revealed there may be a requirement for more detailed excavation and specialist services, such as radiocarbon dating and finds conservation. Any detailed excavation, post-excavation and publication would be the subject of a separate WSI and costing.
- 4.5 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.6 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N W Jones

31 May 2013

Appendix 2: Pen-y-Bryn Ring I

A ring from Pen y bryn, Abergwyngregyn, Gwynedd

A copper-alloy finger ring with a large, flat, oval bezel decorated with 9 punched ring and dot motifs, eight of which are arranged unevenly around the edge of the bezel with a further motif off-centre within these. The bezel is 16.2mm long and 12.3mm wide, thickness at the bezel is 1.4mm.

The band is circular, 3.2mm wide and D-shaped in cross-section, its thickness varies between 1.1mm and 1.3mm. The external diameter of the ring is 21.9mm, internal diameter 19.3mm.

The ring is complete and is dark green in colour with pale green patches, particularly on the underside of the bezel.

Weight is 3g.

The closest parallel on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database is a probable Early-Medieval/Anglo-Saxon ring from Redgrave, Suffolk, record SF-730AB8. Record LVPL-83F68A, a Roman ring from Bossall, North Yorkshire is also similar.

CPAT photographs – 3838-0044 to 0051

Jeff Spencer, Historic Environment Record Officer, February 2015



Photo CPAT 3838-0046

Appendix 3: Pen-y-Bryn Ring II

A second ring from Pen y bryn, Abergwyngregyn, Gwynedd

A copper-alloy finger ring with a large, flat, pointed oval bezel decorated with eight straight (but unevenly spaced) incised lines, six forming a large 'X' and a further 2 following the long axis of the bezel. The bezel is 16mm long and 10.6mm wide, maximum thickness of the bezel is 2mm.

The band is circular, between 3mm and 3.5mm wide and is D-shaped in cross-section, its thickness varies between 1.5mm and 1.8mm. The external diameter of the ring is 19.5mm, internal diameter 16.1mm. The band is decorated with 4 transverse incised lines at the two points at which it meets the bezel, below which on one side is a small area of surface pitting. There are marks on the inside surface of the band suggestive of it having been filed during production and there are other small areas of possible surface damage or faults from the casting process.

The ring is complete and dark green in colour, traces of soil adhere to it in places, particularly in the incised lines, on the underside of the bezel and where the surface has been slightly damaged.

Weight is 3.3g.

In terms of its shape, the closest parallel is the first ring from Pen y bryn. The closest parallel on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database is again the probable Early-Medieval/Anglo-Saxon ring from Redgrave, Suffolk, record SF-730AB8 and record LVPL-83F68A, a Roman ring from Bossall, North Yorkshire is also similar.

CPAT photographs – 3996-0001 to 3996-0008

Jeff Spencer, Historic Environment Record Officer, March 2015



Photo CPAT 3996.0008