

GLAMORGAN-GWENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST
CONTRACTS SECTION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
PENTREPOETH
(A468 BASSALEG BY-PASS)

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REPORT NO. 94/007
PROJECT NO. A170

PENTREPOETH (A468 BASSALEG BY-PASS)

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Summary

GGAT Contracts was commissioned by Newbridge Construction Ltd who (in partnership with the Land Authority for Wales) are preparing proposals for the A468 Bassaleg By-pass, Newport, at Pentrepoeth, to carry out a detailed archaeological desk-based assessment of the impact of the proposals. The study reviewed the evidence held by the County Sites and Monuments Record, and also examined primary and secondary documentary sources; a site visit was undertaken. The study identified only one site upon which the development would have a significant impact, the possible Roman road near Ffynon Oer (PP 18). The development may have an impact on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Coed-y-Defaid, 300m to the south.

It is recommended:

- 1) that Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments be consulted on the possible impact on the Scheduled Ancient Monument,
- 2) that a field evaluation be undertaken to determine the date and nature of the feature identified as a possible Roman road, and
- 3) that a watching brief of topsoil stripping elsewhere should be maintained.

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by M Locock BA AIFA, (Projects Manager (Assessments), Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust), with the assistance of other GGAT staff.

The author is grateful to Miss S C Phillips of Newbridge Construction Ltd, the staff of the Gwent County Record Office, and the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (Curatorial Section) for their help during the project.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Development proposal and commission

Newbridge Construction Ltd and the Land Authority for Wales are preparing proposals for the A468 Bassaleg By-pass, Newport at Pentrepoeth. Following a preliminary archaeological study by Newbridge Construction Ltd, based on information supplied by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (Curatorial Section), **GGAT Contracts** was commissioned to carry out a detailed archaeological desk-based assessment.

1.2 Specification for the project

The project comprised a review of evidence in the County SMR, examination of primary and secondary documentary and cartographic sources, and a site visit. The specification was drawn up by **GGAT Contracts** to fulfil a Scope of Works prepared by Newbridge Construction Ltd and the Land Authority for Wales.

1.3 Layout of the report

The report describes the physical setting of the proposal (Section 2) and then summarises the archaeological resource (Section 3); the impact of the proposal on the resource is assessed (Section 4) and appropriate mitigatory measures are identified (Section 5). Detailed information is provided in a series of Appendices.

1.4 Abbreviations used

All archaeological sites in the vicinity have been identified by the prefix PP; those sites previously recorded in the county Sites and Monuments Record are also referred to by their Primary Record Number (PRN). References to documents are prefixed GRO (Gwent Record Office) or NLW (National Library of Wales); references to published works are given in brackets; the full titles will be found in the bibliography.

2. Physical environment

2.1 Topography

Bassaleg and Pentrepoeth lie 4km west of Newport, on the shoulder of the southwest side of the Ebbw valley, which runs southeast from Risca to the Usk estuary. To the south, the ground rises sharply to 112m on the hills of Coed-y-Defaid, Cleppa and Maes Arthur. The land away from the built-up areas is predominantly pasture. The study area comprises the proposed road corridor running southwest from the A468 roundabout at Bassaleg to a new roundabout at Croes-heolydd, meeting a road running north to rejoin the A468 at Rhiwderin. The corridor varies in width from 30m to 60m.

2.2 Surface geology

The hills of Coed-y-Defaid, Cleppa and Maes Arthur are outcrops of sandstones of the Raglan Marl group of Old Red Sandstone; elsewhere, much of the landscape is covered by glacial morainic drift. The floodplain of the Ebbw is covered by alluvium (BRG 1970; GSGB 1969).

3. Summary of archaeological resource

The archaeological sites in the area are listed in Appendix Two, and the evidence is discussed in Appendix Three; with two exceptions (PP 18, PP 24), all locatable known sites lie outside the road corridor.

3.1 Prehistoric

The earliest dated evidence for human activity in the area is the recovery of a Bronze Age axe (PP 14) from the area south of Bassaleg. Prehistoric flints have also been found (PP 12).

There are three important Iron Age sites in the area; all are hillforts. They are located at Coed-y-Defaid (PP 5), Tredegar Park (PP13) and west of the study area (PP 7). Clearly the density of sites reflects intensive occupation at this period.

3.2 Roman

There is known to have been a road connecting the Roman forts at Caerleon and Cardiff: the Ordnance Survey identified a track running along field boundaries north of The Griffin road as the supposed route (PP 18). In addition to the supposed road itself, a hoard of coins (PP 16) and a scatter of pottery (PP 8) imply local settlement. The interpretation of the placename Bassaleg as a derivation from the Latin *basilica*, implying the presence and survival of a substantial Roman structure has, however, been rejected by all recent authorities.

3.3 Medieval

The medieval landscape of the area is well-represented by known and probable sites, including manor houses (PP 1, PP 2, PP 11) (only PP 11 has been located precisely), the church and priory at Bassaleg (PP 22), and Bassaleg bridge (PP 23). It is possible that St Basil's church, Bassaleg, was built on the site of an earlier Welsh church. Medieval finds have also been recovered from the area (?PP 8, PP 9), and a mill is known from documents (PP 15 or PP 20); Pen-sidan Farm may have a medieval origin (PP 25).

3.4 Post-Medieval

Surviving post-medieval farms include Croes-heolydd, Graig-y-Saeson, Pen-Sidan, and Gloch Wen (PP 9, PP 17, PP 21; PP 25); an early 19th century house also survives in Bassaleg (PP 10). Industrial remains include the 17th-century forge (PP 3) and a quarry (PP 24). The boundary of the deer-park of Cleppa Park also survives (PP 19). The Griffin road is probably c.1800 in date, replacing the earlier route followed by PP 18.

4. Impact of development proposals on archaeological resource

4.1 Sites with statutory protection

The Scheduled Ancient Monument of Coed-y-Defaid (PP 5) lie 300m south of the proposed route; this may be considered by the Secretary of State to be affected in its setting. The settings of the Scheduled Monuments of Tredegar Park (PP 13) and PP 7 will not be affected.

The proposed route will have no impact on the Grade II Listed Buildings of 27 Caerphilly Road (PP 4) and Gloch Wen farmhouse (PP 17).

4.2 Other known sites

The proposed route crosses the course of the possible Roman road (PP 18), and if any related features survive they will be destroyed within the road corridor.

It is improbable that sensitive deposits relating to the post-medieval quarry (PP 24) survive.

The proposed route will have no direct impact on the other known sites.

4.3 Potential sites

The finding of the hoard of Roman coins and pottery in the area (PP 8; PP 16) and the presence of the possible Roman road (PP 18) may imply that there is a Roman site in the vicinity, which may lie in the road corridor.

It is possible, but less likely, that significant further prehistoric or medieval remains occur in the area.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Sites with statutory protection

It is recommended that the views of Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments on the impact of the proposal on the setting of Coedy-Defaid be sought.

5.2 Other known sites

It is recommended that a field evaluation be undertaken to determine the date and nature of the possible Roman road (PP 18), in order to allow the preparation of an appropriate mitigatory strategy.

5.3 Potential sites

It is recommended that other areas where topsoil stripping is planned should be the subject of monitoring by archaeological staff in order to record any significant deposits exposed.

5.4 Suitable staff

This work should be carried out by a suitable professional archaeological contractor, employing qualified archaeological personnel.

Appendix One: Specification

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Supplementary Research Specifications

PENTREPOETH

Definition of Study

The project will conform to the Standard in British Archaeology for Archaeological Desk-Based Studies, issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in September 1993, and will be carried out in accordance with the GGAT Contracts Guidelines for the Execution of Assessment Projects.

1. Objectives

- 1.1 Assessment of existing information to determine the extent, character and significance of archaeological interests, in local, regional, and wider contexts, and the likely effects of the proposed development on such interests, by means of documentary study and field visit.
- 1.2 Identification of areas or features requiring further assessment where present archaeological knowledge is insufficient for informed decisions to be made during the planning process.

2. Documentary Searches

- 2.1 Review of information about sites recorded in County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
- 2.2 Search of cartographic sources for additional archaeological information, and collation of information relating to archaeological interests.
- 2.3 Analysis of aerial photographic coverage held by the County SMR.
- 2.4 Analysis of relevant primary historic documents and published sources for additional archaeological information, and collation of information relating to archaeological interests.

2.5 Analysis of borehole data, geotechnical studies, etc., for additional information, and collation of information relating to archaeological interests.

3. Fieldwork

3.1 Site visit to check the present condition of archaeological features identified by 2.1 - 2.5, and to assess factors that may have influenced the condition or visibility of these features.

3.2 Identification of previously-unknown archaeological features.

3.3 Rapid recording of archaeological features (e.g. sketch plotting and photographs).

4. Assessment

4.1 Assessment of the information acquired from the execution of 2 and 3.

4.2 Assessment of the impact of the development proposals on the defined archaeological interests.

5. Report

5.1 Client - A report comprising a synthesis of data gathered through the execution of 2-4, with supporting evidence in appendices, and identification of features of archaeological interest onto scale drawings, or listing of such features by eight figure National Grid References. The identification of legal constraints (e.g. scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings) relating to archaeological interests.

5.2 Academic - A digest report of significant archaeological information in an appropriate outlet (e.g. regional/national academic journal).

6. Archive

6.1 Preparation of an ordered archive of records made during the assessment in accordance with NMR cataloguing procedures.

6.2 Deposition of the assessment archive with an appropriate organisation (usually **GGAT Contracts** records).

6.3 Submission of a copy of the report for inclusion in the county SMR, within 6 months of the completion of the work.

7. Staff

7.1 The project will be managed by the Principal Archaeological Officer (Contracts), AG Marvell BA MIFA, and carried out by the Projects Manager (Assessments), M Locock BA AIFA, both of whom have wide experience of such work.

8. Insurance

8.1 GGAT Contracts holds insurance cover for all risks involved in this type of project, including substantial Professional Indemnity cover.

9. Scope of the work

9.1 The work outlined in this specification will be carried out to the highest professional standards, and the conclusions drawn will be based on a considered review of the evidence available. However, the archaeological resource is unpredictable, and the encountering of unexpected archaeological deposits on the site cannot be ruled out.

Appendix Two: Archaeological sites in the area

1. Sites listed on the county Sites and Monuments Record within 500m of the corridor

PRN	Type	Date	NGR	Site No.	Details
39g	Earthwork	IA	ST 2640 8773	(PP7)	SAM Mm 66
41g	Landform	M	ST 2756 8626	(PP6)	
42g	Dwelling/find	PM/M	ST 2639 8606	(PP9)	
43g	Dwelling	M	ST 2658 8570	(PP25)	(Rees 1932)
45g	Church	M/PM	ST 2774 8712	(PP22)	
46g	Priory	M	"	"	
47g	Church	M	"	"	
48g	Bridge	M	ST 2795 8704	(PP23)	
49g	Hillfort	IA	ST 2895 8684	(PP13)	SAM Mm 84
55g	Iron works	PM	ST 2796 8652	(PP3)	
57g	Hillfort	IA	ST 2733 8620	(PP5)	SAM Mm 134
58g	Manor house	M	ST 2776 8652	(PP2)	
59g	Manor house	M	ST 2734 8591	(PP11)	
73g	Manor house	M	ST 27 86	(PP1)	
74g	Finds	BA	ST 27 86	(PP14)	(Savory 1955, 21)
156g	Mill	M	ST 283 865	(PP15)	(Rees 1932; Jack 1981, 88)
3781g	Dwelling	PM	ST 2800 8638	(PP10)	
3782g	Finds	Rom/M	ST 255 686	(PP8)	
4252g	Finds	Rom	ST 278 858	(PP16)	(Trett 1987)
4285g	Finds	Pre	ST 270 859	(PP12)	
4342g	Dwelling	PM	ST 274 869	(PP4)	LB (Grade II)
4531g	Dwelling	PM	ST 262 874	(PP17)	LB (Grade II)
A01	?Roman road			(PP18)	

2. Sites not listed on the SMR

Type	Date	NGR	Site no.	Details
Park pale?	M	ST 273 860	PP19	(Borthwick 1992)
Fulling mill	M	ST 277 870	PP20	(Jack 1981)
Farm	PM	ST 279 859	PP21	(Borthwick 1992, 32-33)
Quarry	PM	ST 267 862	PP24	

3. Abbreviations

IA Iron Age (400 BC - 100 AD); LB Listed Building; M Medieval (1066 AD - 1485 AD); Pre Prehistoric (10,000 BC - 100 AD); PM Post medieval (1485 AD - 1900 AD); Rom Roman (43 AD - 410 AD); SAM Scheduled Ancient Monument

The evidence for these sites is discussed in Appendix Three.

Appendix Three: Assessment of archaeological resource

PP 1 Manor house

The manor of Bassaleg is known from the Norman conquest, and had a manor house and demesne. Its location is unknown.

PP 2 Dyffryn Court manor house

Duffryn Eborth manor house or court house is mentioned in medieval documents (Rees 1932), and may be on the site of Dyffryn Court.

PP 3 Tredegar ironworks

A post-medieval ironworks producing 180 tons per year in 1717, using pig iron from the Forest of Dean. Ironworking in the Caerleon and Newport area starts in the medieval period, although the precise locations are unknown. This may be the site Tyre Enys Eduw, mentioned in a deed of 1681 as including a smith's forge (GRO M464 5903).

PP 4 27 Caerphilly Road

A one-storey cottage of possible 17th-century date, a Grade II Listed Building.

PP 5 Coed-y-Defaid hillfort

A small bi-vallate Iron Age hillfort; a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Mm 134); identified as part of Hogg's Group L of small hillforts (1972), representing individual "farms".

PP 6 Landform feature

A feature that had been suggested as an Iron Age hillfort, but is now concluded to be a medieval trackway (GGAT 1979, 104).

PP 7 Earthwork

This ringwork has been interpreted as either an Iron Age fort or a medieval motte; the former is preferred. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Mm 66). Part of Hogg's Group L (1972).

PP 8 Roman and medieval finds

Pottery was found by GGAT from a watching brief on the Rhiwderin-Wentloog gas pipeline in 1978; the occurrence of patches of nettles in the field were taken to imply the possible presence of an occupation site (GGAT 1979, 102-103).

PP 9 Croes-heolydd Farm

Although the existing buildings are 17th century in origin (altered in the 1840s), the recovery of a medieval lead-token mould from the site may imply that it had an earlier origin.

PP 10 27-30 Forge Lane

A post-medieval building whose construction date is suggested by a datestone to be 1828.

PP 11 Gwern-y-cleppa manor house

Remains of walls visible at this site have been identified as the medieval manor or court house "Gwern-y-cleppa", the residence of Ivor Hael in the 14th century. The house was still occupied during the Civil War, but was ruinous by 1801 (Coxe 1801).

PP 12 Prehistoric finds

Three prehistoric flint flakes were reported to the National Museum of Wales.

PP 13 Tredegar Park hillfort

A large Iron Age hillfort: a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Mm 84), interpreted by Hogg (1972) as a regional centre.

PP 14 Bronze Age find

Borthwick (1992) suggests that the find location of the Bronze Age palstave may have been ST 277 864.

PP 15 Medieval mill

A mill in Dyffryn is suggested by Rees (1932).

PP 16 Roman hoard find

The recovery of nearly 1000 Roman coins of late 3rd century date (Trett 1987) from Graig-y-Saeson implies that there is likely to have been a Roman settlement site nearby.

PP 17 Gloch Wen Farmhouse

Part 16th-century house, with later additions: Grade II Listed Building.

PP 18 Roman road

A Roman road ran between the forts at Caerleon and Cardiff (Route 60b; Iter XII), following the terrace from northwest Caerleon. The route between Bassaleg and Rumney is uncertain, but The Griffin road may follow it in places (a conjecture based on its

straightness) (Margary 1973, 324-325); this had been suggested as early as the 1st edition 1" to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of 1831, and on the 1st edition 25" maps, the road is shown leaving The Griffin road northeast of the junction with the lane leading to Croes-heolydd, and then heading north to the Old Quarry (PP 24) as a hollow-way and embanked road, before turning northeast and running along the field boundary as a hollow-way to meet the path that reaches the Pentrepoeth Road east of The Knoll House. The line is however rejected by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (OS 1991), probably because of the absence of any confirmatory finds. There is little doubt that this route predates The Griffin road, but since that is likely to be early 19th century in date, the route cannot be said to be of any necessary antiquity (see Appendix Five); its preferred interpretation is as the earlier route of the road from Bassaleg/Pentrepoeth to Croes-heolydd and so to Cardiff, which was replaced by The Griffin road and reverted to footpath.

PP 19 Park pale

A feature interpreted as a lynchet or park pale (boundary fence and ditch) of the north boundary of the post-medieval deer park of Cleppa Park was noted by Borthwick (1992).

PP 20 Bassaleg fulling mill

Jack (1981) locates the fulling mill of Bassaleg (156g) at SO (sic) 277 870, on uncertain evidence. A location on a water course is more probable, as suggested by Rees (1932) (= PP 15).

PP 21 Graig-y-Saeson Farm

From cartographic evidence, it seems that Graig-y-Saeson Farm was built in the mid 19th century, and the name was transferred from Coed-y-Defaid (Borthwick 1992, 32-33). Borthwick rejects any particular significance for the Saeson (= foreigner, Saxon) place-name element.

PP 22 St Basil's Church

The building is medieval in origin, built in Perpendicular style; the nave has been rebuilt in the post-medieval period. The restoration is dated to 1904 by John (1923). Possibly an earlier Welsh church dedicated to St Basil existed (47g). A Benedictine Priory was founded in 1116, and dissolved in 1235 (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 58; 356); it was only ever small cell (Cowley 1977, 40).

PP 23 Bassaleg Bridge

The modern bridge is on the site of a timber bridge across the Ebbw recorded by Leland in the 16th century, perhaps that mentioned in a charter of Bassaleg Priory in the 12th century.

PP 24 Quarry

This feature is shown on the 1st edition 25" OS map of 1883, marked as "Old Quarry", but has now been cleared. It is interpreted as a 19th century quarry, perhaps used for stone for the construction of walls and other features required by the turnpike roads. It is unlikely that significant related deposits survive.

PP 25 Pen-sidan Farm

A post-medieval farm, suggested by Rees (1932) to have a medieval origin.

Appendix Four: Aerial photograph evidence

The aerial photographs held by the SMR were examined for previously-unrecognised features.

None were identified.

Appendix Five: Cartographic and documentary evidence

The parish of Bassaleg was divided into the three townships of Dyffryn, Rogerstone and Graig (Bradney 1993, 65); the parish was largely agricultural until the late 19th century. The church at Bassaleg is of some antiquity, and had a priory cell of Glastonbury attached in the medieval period (Bradney 1993, 78). The land formed part of the Tredegar Park estate, held by the Morgans, in the late post-medieval period.

- late 11th C. Bassaleg was a manor of the lordship of Gwynllwg, held by William de Berkerolles (Rees 1932).
- 1101 Bassaleg church and tithes were granted to Glastonbury Abbey by Robert Haia (Borthwick 1992, 31); dated to 1116 by Cowley (1977, 270).
- 1146 A charter mentions the monks of Bassaleg and the church of St Basil (Crouch 1988, 2).
- 1195 A charter grants two marks annually to the guest-house at Glastonbury Abbey from the church dues of Bassaleg (Crouch 1988, 40).
- 1230 The manor of Bassaleg was leased to the Bishop of Llandaff by Glastonbury Abbey (Crouch 1988, 61).
- 1291 There was a fulling mill at Bassaleg belonging to the Bishop of Llandaff (Jack 1981, 88).
- 1314 The parish of Bassaleg was one knight's fee (Bradney 1993, 65).
- 1537 The manor and parish were seized by king; by 1540 they were sold to Robert Holgate, Bishop of Llandaff, and leased to William Morgan of Tredegar (Borthwick 1992, 32).
- 1791 The Morgans of Tredegar were part of the Newport Turnpike Trust, involved in building new and improved roads including one "from Newport Bridge via Tredegar and Romney Bridge to Cardiff town hall, and from Newport Bridge to Cardiff town hall over the Bassaleg road" (NLW Tredegar 59/67).
- 1841 The Tithe Apportionment shows that landholdings are based on the modern farms, including Ffynon Oer, Croes-heolydd, and Pensiddan. Dyffryn Court is at this stage called Dyffryn House (GRO D 314.39). One of Ffynon Oer's fields is called "Caer Turnpike", perhaps implying that The

Griffin road was, or was considered to be, a turnpike road.

1861 Tredegar Old Park, New Park, Cleppa Park were all owned by Morgans of Tredegar (Borthwick 1992).

1883 The 1st edition 25" to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows The Griffin road, joined by the "supposed Roman road" which runs north and northeast to Pentrepoeth as an embanked road and hollow-way following the field boundaries. The "Old Quarry" (PP 24) is shown clearly.

Appendix Six: Site visit

A site visit was undertaken by M Locock and D J Maynard BSc.

No new sites were identified.

PP 18

The course of the "supposed Roman road", shown on the Ordnance Survey 25" to 1 mile 1st and 2nd edition sheets, was examined. On the maps, it is shown leaving The Griffin and running north diagonally across the field, initially as a hollow-way, then as an embanked track, to the corner of the field at the Old Quarry. It then turns northeast to run on the north side of the field boundaries as a hollow way. It then vanishes, although the alignment is followed by a footpath which crosses a footbridge over the stream and then runs up to the Pentrepoeth road east of The Knoll House. No evidence for the track was visible in the field north of The Griffin road, and both the hollow-way and embanked sections have been levelled. The route from the Old Quarry towards Pentrepoeth was marked by a drop in level at the field boundary, but no more definite features were seen.

PP 24

This is shown clearly on OS maps as an irregular hollow feature. On the ground there is now very little to be seen. It has been infilled, and is now grassed over except at the extreme south end, where the spoil and rubble fill is still exposed.

No new evidence relating to the other known sites was recorded.

Appendix Seven: Sources consulted

The following sources were consulted:

Sites and Monuments Record

Held at GGAT, Swansea (see Appendix Two)

Secondary sources

See Bibliography

Documentary and cartographic sources

Gwent County Record Office, Cwmbran (see Appendix Five)

Aerial photographs

Held at GGAT, Swansea (see Appendix Four)

A Site Visit was also undertaken.

Sources not consulted:

Documentary and cartographic sources

Collections held by the Public Record Office, National Library of Wales (Aberystwyth) and other record offices were not consulted, since sufficient data was obtained from the Gwent County Record Office and published works.

Pictorial sources

No unpublished pictorial sources were examined.

Aerial photograph collections

No further collections were consulted since the Gwent SMR contained adequate coverage.

Geotechnical information

No geotechnical data could be obtained.

Secondary sources

No further secondary sources were consulted, since sufficient primary data was obtained to allow conclusions to be drawn.

Appendix Eight: Catalogue of research archive

The research archive is held at GGAT, Swansea, classified according to the NMR archive material categories, and includes the following:

- A. Copy of the report
- B. Notes from site visit
- C. Photocopies of OS maps at various scales, annotated by researcher
- D. Photographs from site visit
- G. Notes made during research, including transcripts of relevant documents and notes from secondary sources
- I. Annotated drafts of the report
- L. Brief and specification for the report
- M. Correspondence and notes from meetings with specialists

There is no material for classes E, F, H, J, K and N.

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