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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE BONTGOCH
STORAGE RESERVOIR SCHEME (CON 92/03), 1994

Client: Dwr Cymru

Project Officer: K Murphy

Report by: K Murphy, P Sambrook and N Ludlow

Dated: 14 April 1994

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charity (No. 504616)

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1.1 Content and scope of the watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during an operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons - normally a development or other construction project - within a specified area where archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report.

The watching brief will be intended to allow, subject to resources, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits in advance of their disturbance or destruction and to provide an opportunity, if necessary, for the watching archaeologist to alert all interested parties to the presence of an archaeological find for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are insufficient to support satisfactory treatment.

The watching brief is not intended as a substitute for contingent excavation.

The client will be supplied with 3 copies of an archaeological report of the results of the watching brief. The report will be fully representative of all the information recovered. Normally it should be read in conjunction with the desk top assessment for the scheme which provides the historical framework for the watching brief. A copy of the report will also be deposited with Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record.

1.2 Purpose and methodologies of the watching brief

The purpose of the watching brief is to undertake as complete a record as possible of any archaeological features affected by the client's scheme of works. In the case of larger archaeological sites it will seldom be possible or necessary to undertake a record of the entire site; the record will be undertaken only on those areas of the site that may be affected.

The primary stage of the watching brief for any scheme normally involves consultation of the desk top assessment for the scheme and/or consultation of Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, which is maintained by Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Curatorial Section, for those sites affected by the scheme.

The client will normally advise Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Section of any changes in the proposed works resulting from their consultation of the desk top assessment, and of any sites which may still be affected by the scheme. The client will also provide the Field Section with a proposed schedule of works in order that a full field study may be performed on any affected site prior to the commencement of the works.

Work on or around those affected sites will be subject to the watching brief. The work will be closely observed by an archaeologist from the Field Section who will also undertake a full drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological features which may be disturbed by the scheme, and any artefact or find exposed during the works. Recording will be carried out where necessary and when convenient: it is the Field Section's aim to minimise any disruption to the client's schedule. However, if archaeological features may be lost during the scheme, it may be necessary for the Field Section to request a postponement of the works in order that the archaeology may be recorded. Larger areas affected may require fuller excavation and/or survey.

2 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

The only clear archaeological sites cut by the new pipeline of the Bontgoch Service Reservoir were leats associated with 18th- and 19th century lead mines. Several newly identified bronze age ritual sites just off the line of the pipeline near to the new Service Reservoir confirm the archaeological importance of this area.

The course of the pipeline from Bontgoch Water Works up to the new Service Reservoir on Banc Mynydd Gorddu and then down into the valley below the lead mine of Mynydd Gorddu, was walked prior to the start of work on the pipeline. A watching brief was also carried out on topsoil stripping operations where the pipeline crossed two leats associated with lead mining operations in the valley below Mynydd Gorddu mine. During the course of this work several archaeological sites not previously recorded were identified. Brief descriptions were made of these and they were assigned record numbers on Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Sites and Monuments Record. The numbers referred to in the text and on Map 1 are these record numbers.

A small raised bog just west of the Water Works at Bontgoch was to be crossed by the pipeline. This was noted as an area of environmental archaeological importance in DAT's desk top assessment and so formed part of this watching brief. The landowner, however, has recently excavated and removed a large portion of the peat to create a pond (finding and removing several tree trunks from the base of the peat deposits). Here a section through the peat revealed it to be c. 0.5m thick and overlaying a blue-grey gleyed, shaley clay.

West of the peat bog, the course of the pipeline rises steeply onto Banc Mynydd Gorddu. The landscape here is characterised by improved pasture land, though wide spaced ridge and furrow plough-marks between the edge of the peat bog and the foot of the hill attests to some arable farming here in the past. During topsoil removal on the eastern slope of Mynydd Gorddu, it was observed that the brown, humic, soil was quite thin, c.15cm in depth on average, and frequently interrupted by shale outcrops. There were several features of archaeological interest between Bontgoch and the site of the new Service Reservoir, though none of them was directly affected by the pipeline. They include:

26575. A possible hut platform, c.5.0m in diameter.

12026 and 12033. Two possible bronze age standing stones.

12027. A possible bronze age ritual cairn, consisting of a circular earthwork, 4.0m in diameter enclosing a depression in the centre of which stands a large boulder (Fig. 1).

12032. A large clearance cairn 15m long x 7m wide x 1.2m high, made up of quartzite and limestone erratic boulders.

12034. A small circular mound, possibly a grassed-over clearance cairn, 2m in diameter x 0.1m high was observed on the site of the new Service Reservoir.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Details of the Bontgoch Storage Reservoir Scheme were forwarded to the Curatorial Section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust by Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water for comment in February 1992.

Following the initial comments made by the Curatorial Section of the Trust, Dwr Cymru were advised of the need for a detailed archaeological desk top assessment of the project to be prepared in order for detailed mitigatory measures to be drafted. This desk top assessment was produced by Dyfed Archaeological Trust in July 1992. Dwr Cymru accepted the recommendations in the report and commissioned a watching brief to be carried out on any archaeological sites affected by the scheme prior to and/or during the work, as part of the mitigation strategy. An archaeological report on the results of the watching brief was also commissioned.

3.0 THE FINDS

No finds were discovered during the watching brief.

4.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Trust would like to thank scheme engineers Ken Jones and Aled Hughes for their assistance and help on this watching brief.

5.0 FIGURES

Fig. 1. Sketch plans of sites 26577 and 12027

Map 1. In wallet at rear of report. Annotated engineer's plan (drawing no. 11566212) showing sites mentioned in text.

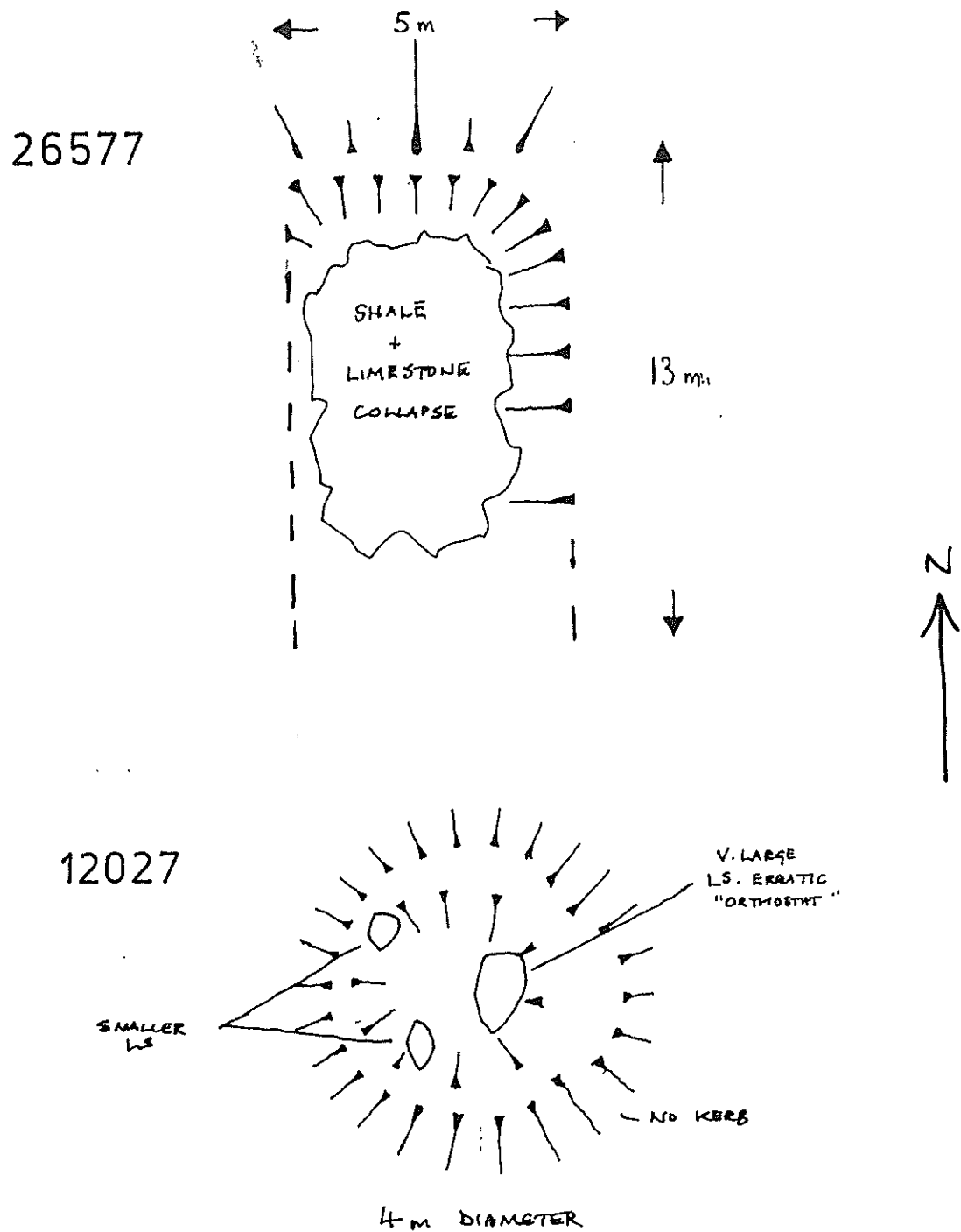
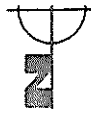


Fig.1. Sketch plans of sites 26577 and 12027



68

600mm NB GR



Existing access onto highway

5403

26577

12874

9138

9139

2923

0011

4817

6314

Shift (Ground)

WASHOUT

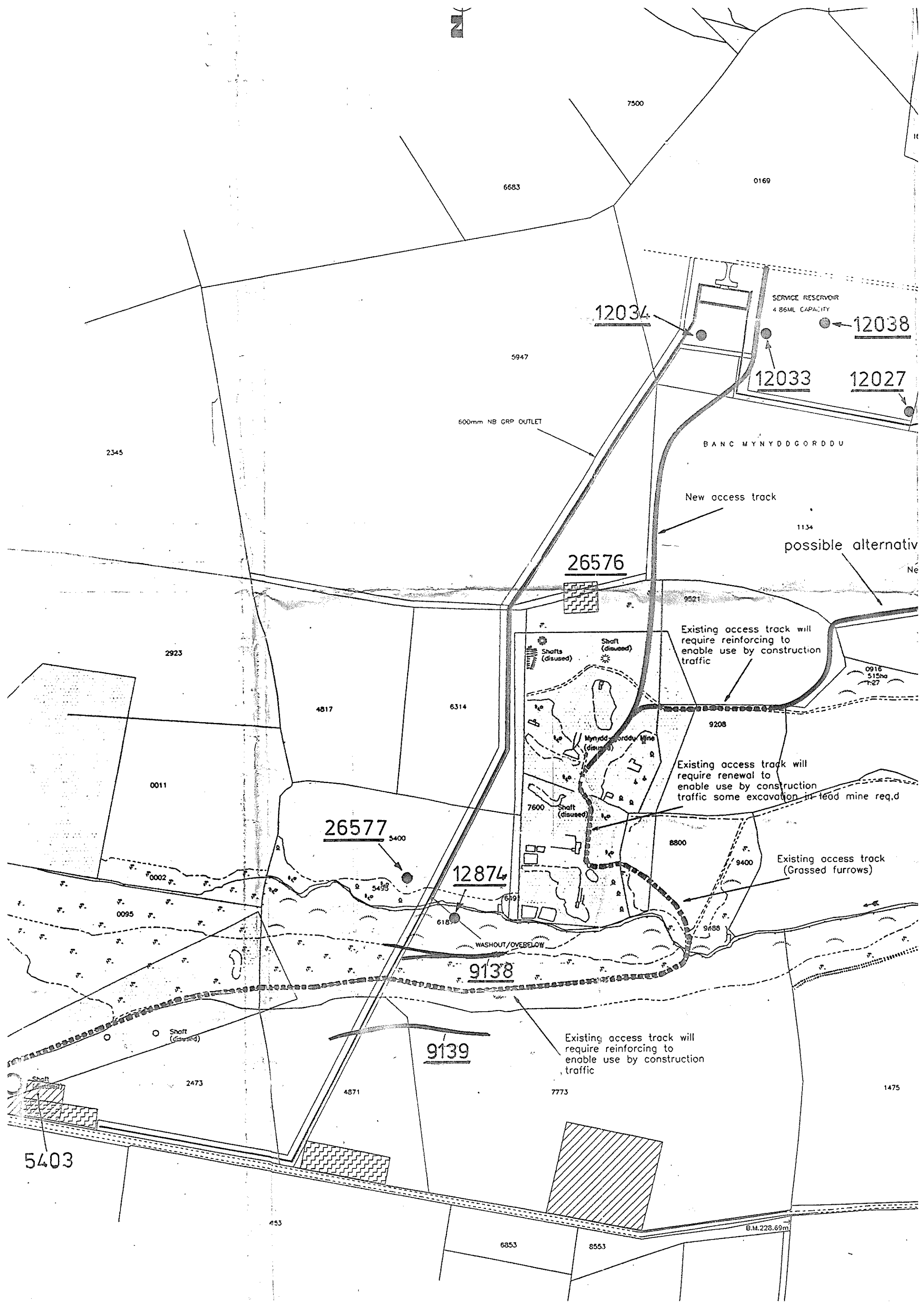
2473

4871

0063

453

68



SERVICE RESERVOIR
4.86ML CAPACITY

12034

12038

12033

12027

600mm NB GRP OUTLET

BANC MYNYDDGORDDU

New access track

possible alternative

26576

Existing access track will
require reinforcing to
enable use by construction
traffic

Existing access track will
require renewal to
enable use by construction
traffic some excavation in lead mine req'd

Existing access track
(Grassed furrows)

Existing access track will
require reinforcing to
enable use by construction
traffic

26577

12874

9138

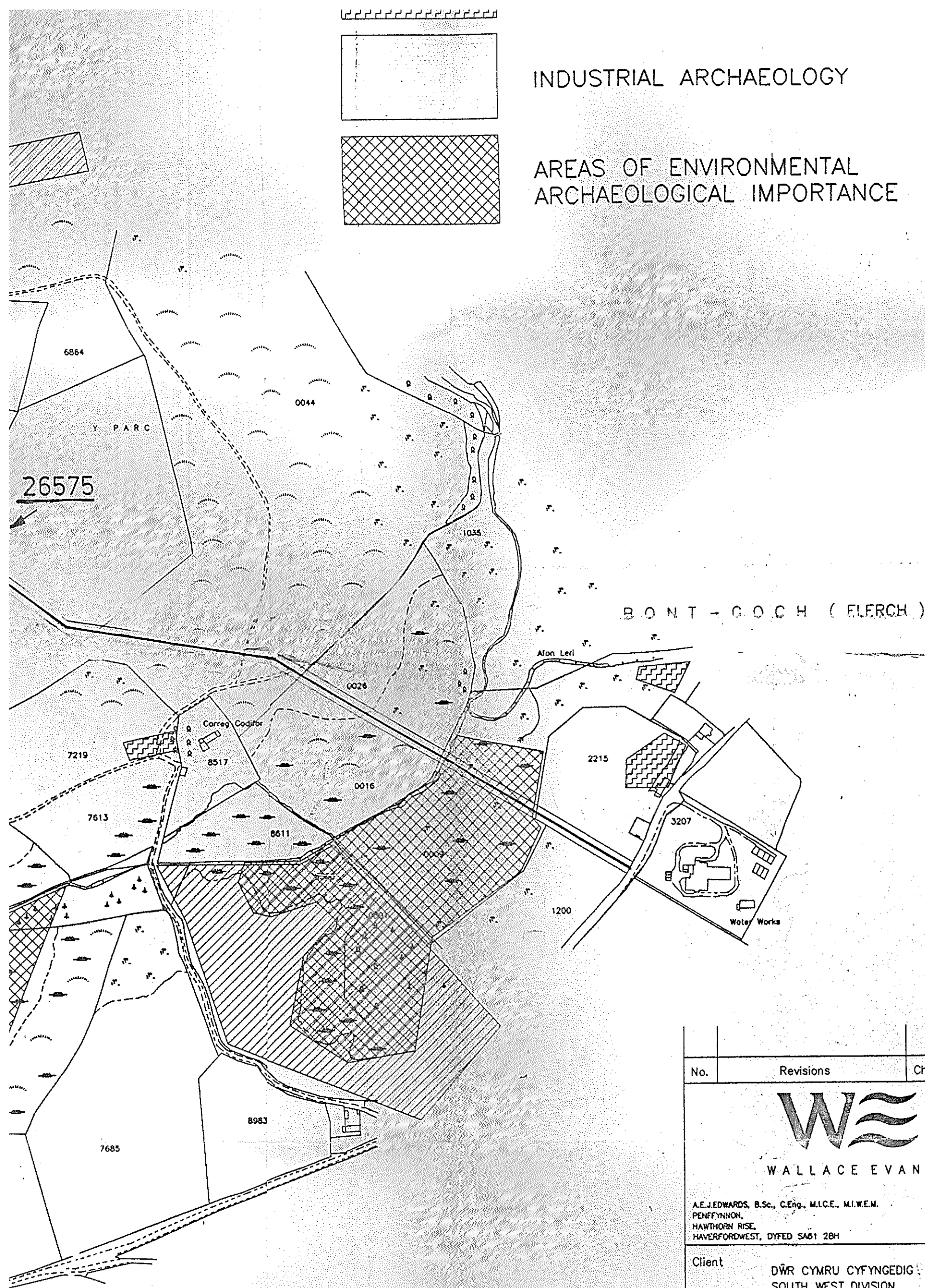
9139


5403

B.M. 228.69m

INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE



No.	Revisions	Chkd	Date
<div> WALLACE EVANS</div>			
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Scheme	BONTGOCH SERVICE RESERVOIR		
Title	PIPELINE ROUTE INDICATING AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL INTEREST		

TO SCALE