

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



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REPORT ON THE WATCHING BRIEF ON THE PONTARDULAIS

TO

AMMANFORD

GAS PIPELINE, CARMARTHENSHIRE

(HPW 66)

JANUARY 1995

Commissioned by: British Gas (Wales) plc

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Details of the proposed Pontardulais gas pipeline were forwarded to the Heritage Management section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust by British Gas (Wales) plc for comment on 3 December 1993.

Following the initial comments made by the Heritage Management section of the Trust, British Gas (Wales) plc 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 February 1994. British Gas (Wales) plc 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.

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 the Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record housed with the Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

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 Heritage Management section, for those sites affected by the scheme.

The client will normally advise Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Operations 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 Operations 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 Operations 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 Operations 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 Operations 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 main area of archaeological interest noted in the desk top assessment on the line of the pipeline corridor was from the River Loughor to the A483. The length of pipeline corridor in this area was examined following the topsoil strip for any features of archaeological and historical interest. Hedgebanks, where cut through were categorised and notes made on other aspects of the landscape pertinent to the history and archaeology of the area. Only where the pipeline passed close to prehistoric standing stone (ref no. 676, Map 3) was the pipe trench examined during its excavation. Features of archaeological interest are recorded here starting with those near the River Loughor:

From the River Loughor (Map 1) to the north the pipeline crossed an area of alluvium and then ran along a low terrace composed of coarse gravel. Only one hedgebank (D) now exists from the river to the hedgebank E. This surviving hedgebank was only 30cm high and was composed of upcast topsoil and subsoil. It overlay an orange-brown silty-loam buried soil - this is substantially different from the present-day topsoil.

Hedgebank E, forming the boundary to an area of woodland (11718) and lying close to an old farm (28152), was a substantial structure, over 3m wide and 1m high with a ditch to the south. It was built from large, rounded boulders and soil. A large sherd of 18th century pottery was found in the make-up of the bank.

It was not possible to identify any features of interest in the pipeline corridor through the woodland 11718 because of the nature of the topsoil strip. However, on either side of the corridor insubstantial former hedgebanks were noted demonstrating former agricultural use of this area of woodland. To the north of the woodland boundary F was seen to be a substantial lynchet (Map 2).

The two roadside hedgebanks G were quite insubstantial, about 0.6m high and 2m wide, and composed of upcast topsoil over a mid-brown silty-loam buried soil. This contrasts with the modern dark brown silty-loamy topsoil recorded between banks F to H. Bank H was earth built with a rubble stone facing - it was not possible to record the buried soil associated with it.

Immediately to the north of hedgebank H lay a peat deposit. The depth of the peat is unknown but from the depth of the tracks of vehicles it can be estimated to be at least half a metre. From this peat deposit to the hedgebank J and through to hedgebank M (Map 3) topsoil consisted of a dark brown to black silty-clay-loam podzol with a high organic content. In patches the organic content was of such high proportions that the soil was peaty.

Hedgebank J is 1m wide and 2m high and consisted of upcast soil, similar to modern topsoil, and rubble. The buried soil was not seen. Hedgebank K (Map 3) is 0.8m high and 2m wide and consisted of upcast subsoil over a mid-brown silty-loam buried soil. This is in contrast with the modern black organic soil. It is assumed therefore that the hedgebank was constructed under a different agricultural regime from the present and that the organic peaty

soil was a post-bank formation. Hedgebank L, in contrast, was of similar size as K but was built from upcast topsoil and boulders and overlay a soil identical to the modern organic soil.

Site 29561 was discovered during the walking of the pipeline corridor. A large flat stone was noted with, close by, other smaller stones, apparently forming part of a wall foundation. The large stone had traces of burning and may have been a hearth-stone. Surrounding these stones was a scatter of pottery, clay tobacco pipes, ash and burnt bones. The pottery and pipes date from the late 17th and 18th centuries. This is then the site of a dwelling abandoned prior to the compilation of the first maps of the area in the early 19th century.

Hedgebank M was 0.8m high and 2m high with a ditch to the south. Built of upcast black topsoil with rubble over a buried soil similar to the modern surrounding soil. From M to the hedgebank R the topsoil become very organic and in places formed a peat deposit of unknown depth.

Roadside hedgebanks N were 0.5m high and 2m wide and were built of upcast topsoil and subsoil. The buried soil was not seen. Hedgebank O was similar.

Observations were made as the pipeline trench was dug approaching the standing stone (676). However, because of the peaty nature of the ground and the wet conditions nothing of archaeological interest was noted.

At P two roadside hedgebanks were of similar construction; 0.8m high and 2m wide composed of upcast black soil and rubble over a podzolic buried soil which was considerably less organic than the modern soil. Hedgebanks Q and R were of identical construction to P.

From hedgebank R to the A483 the soil was mineral rather than organic and consisted of mid- to dark-brown silty-loams. It is interesting to note that this change of soil type coincides with the boundary of the former open field system (11719). Nothing of interest was recorded at the site of the low earthwork bank 11867.

Hedgebank S was insubstantial, 0.4m high and 1.5m wide, and consisted of upcast topsoil over a silty-loam buried soil. T and C were of a similar design. Hedgebank B was built from topsoil with much stone and overlay a reddish-brown silty-loam buried soil. This was in contrast to the modern surrounding soil of dark brown silty-clay-loam.

2.1 Summary

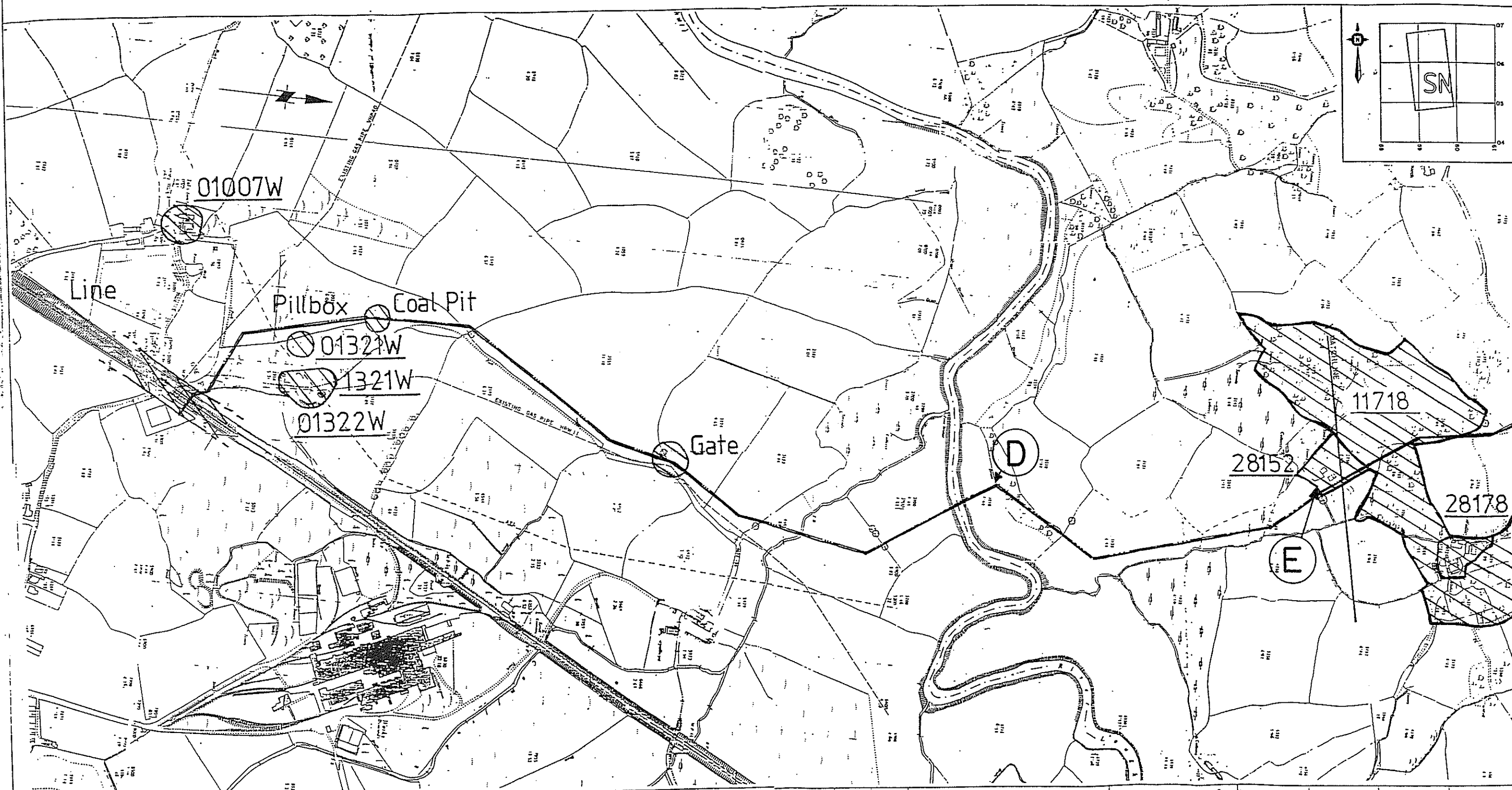
Clearly there was a wide variety of hedgebank type sectioned by the gas pipeline. This is a clear indication that the landscape through which the pipeline passed was not planned and created in a short period of time but rather evolved, changed and developed over centuries to attain its present form. Modern and buried soils confirm this. The clear differences between modern soils

and some of the soils buried beneath the hedgebanks are also an indication to the changes which have occurred in the environment since the construction of some of the hedgebanks. In particular, some of the organic soils seem to be a fairly recent development. It is likely, therefore, that much of the present-day rather poor quality land through which the pipeline passed was formerly of better quality. This is of significance when one considers the size of population the land may have been capable of supporting in the Bronze Age when the standing stone 676 was erected.

OCCUPIER

WAYLEAVE No.

FILE REF No.



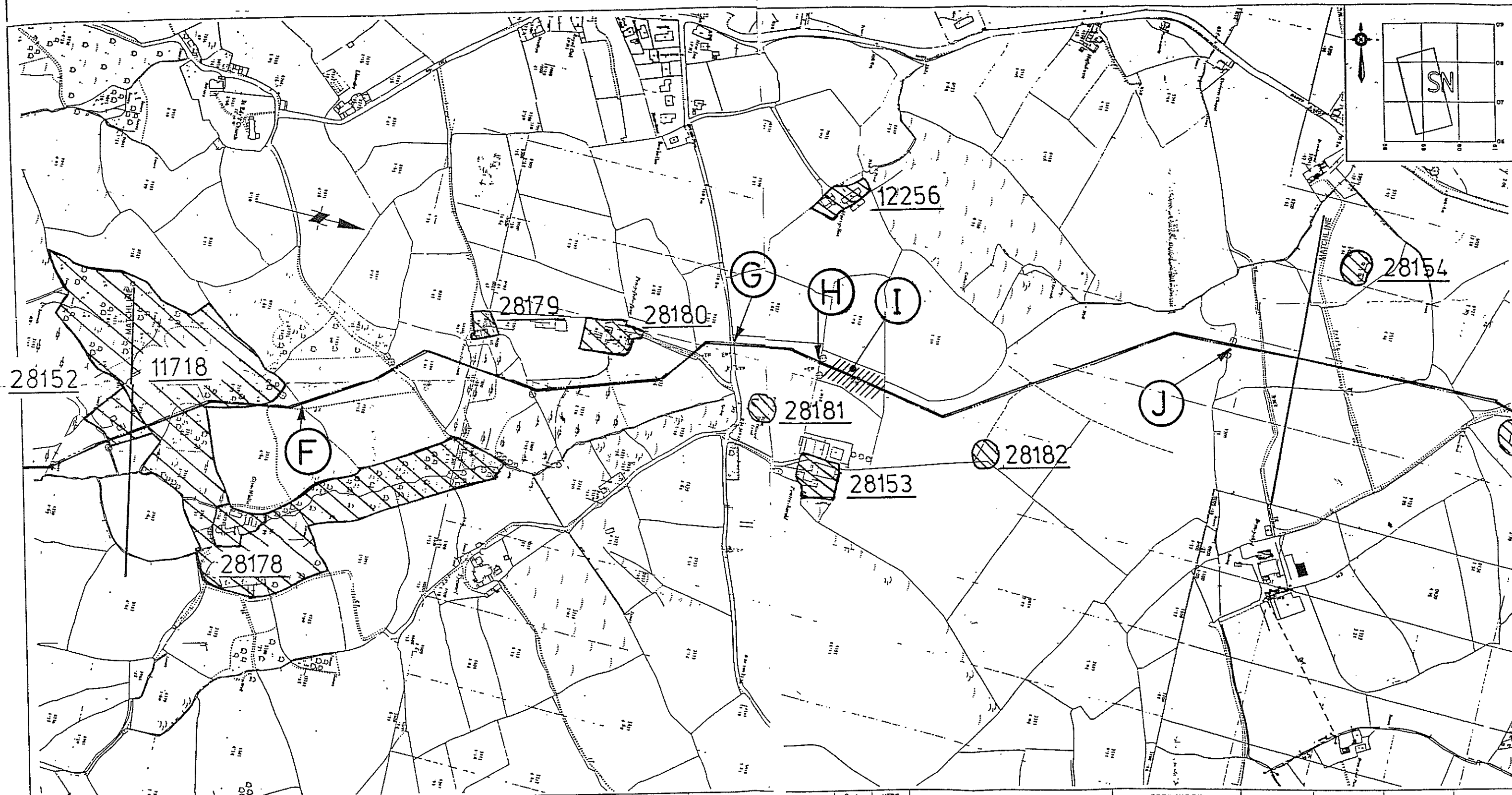
KEY HEAVY WALL PIPE

Rev	Detail	Date	UTRS	PIPE SPECIFICATIONS	PRESSURES	Drn. C.G./H.E.	Date	Ckd.	App.
A	Revised Route: 2559, 274 & 3683	28.9.92	-	Grade W.T. Dia. Design Proximity Locater Distance Cooling	TEST PRESSURES		Date	Route	

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map with the sanction of the
Frame size

MAP 1

FILE REF No.



Rev.	D.
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Date Revised	UTRS Sheet Date	PIPE SPECIFICATIONS							PRESSURES			Drn. CC./HE.	Date	22.9.92	Ckd.	App.
		Grade	W.T.	Dia.	Design Factor	Proximity Distance	Coating	TEST PRESSURE		Date	Route : MAP 2					
								MAXIMUM OPERATING PRESSURE			PONTARDULAIS TO AMMANFORD PRE-CONSTRUCTION					
								ACTUAL OPERATING PRESSURE			Route No.		Sheet No.		Rev.	
											HPW66		2P of 6			

British Gas
Wdes/Cymru

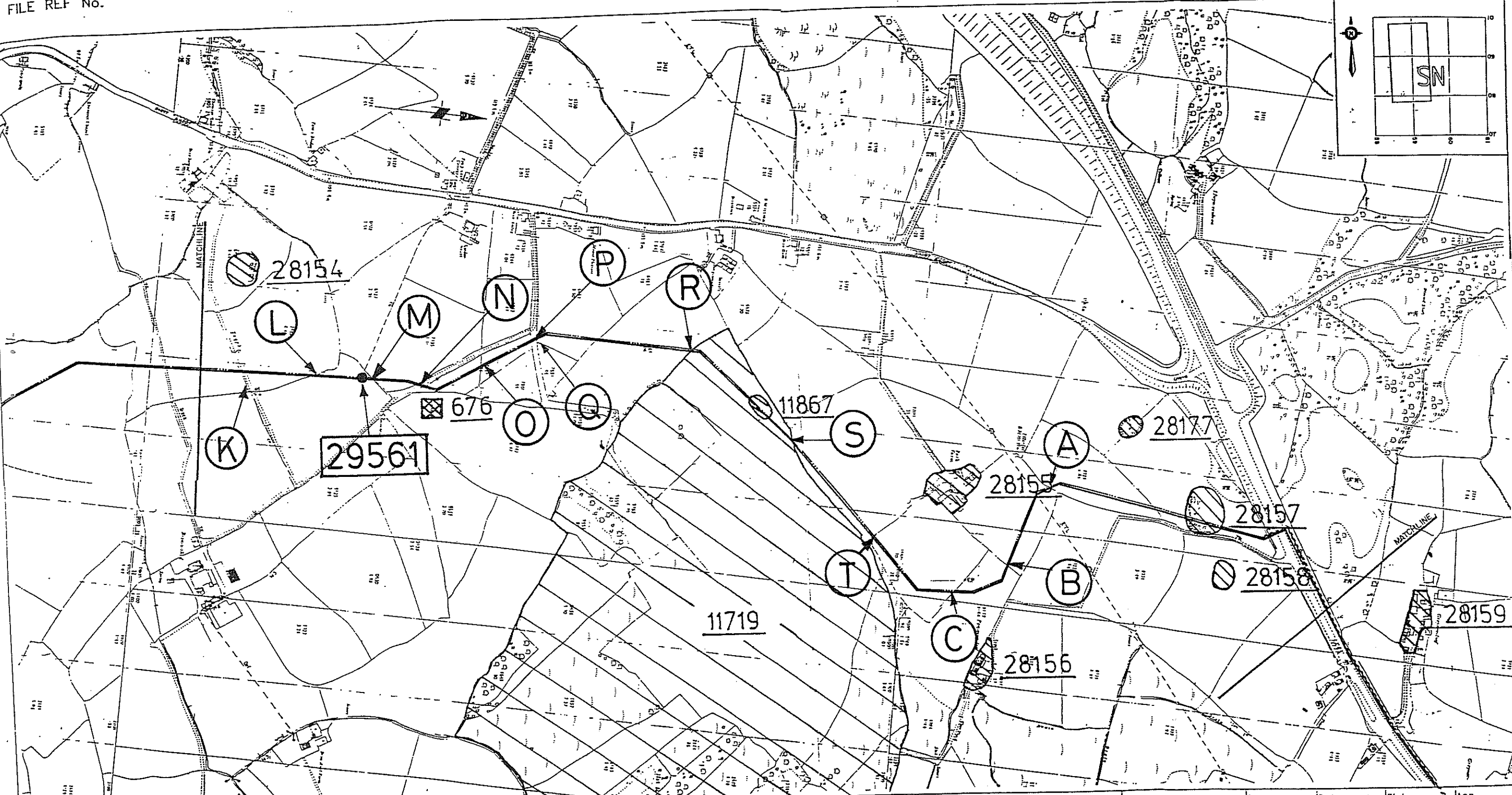
REGIONAL

Area shown is two square kilometres	Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the sanction of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown Copyright Reserved.	Frame size A1 800 x 550
SCALE:- 1:2500 400 MILLIMETRES TO ONE KILOMETRE 100 50 0 100 200 300 m		

OCCUPIER

WAYLEAVE No.

FILE REF No.



KEY HEAVY WALL PIPE ---

British Gas
Wales/Cymru

REGIONAL

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Frame size A1 800 x 550
SCALE:- 1:2500 400 MILLIMETRES TO ONE KILOMETRE

Rev	Details	Date Revised	UTRS Inset Date	PIPE SPECIFICATIONS						PRESSURES		Drn. C&/E	Date 22.9.92	Ckd.	App.
		Grade	W.T.	Dia.	Design Factor	Proximity Distance	Coating	TEST PRESSURE	Date						
A	New route taken, 6995,0006 & 0110	28.9.92										Route : PONTARDULAIS TO AMMANFORD PRE-CONSTRUCTION			
C	HEAVY WALL PIPE ADDED	23.11.93													

MAP 3

MAP 3