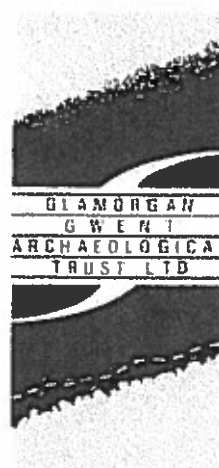


**Traveller's Rest junction, Carmarthenshire:
archaeological watching brief,
preliminary report**

April 2001

**A report for Thyssen Construction Ltd
by J. Kate Howell BSc**



Contracts Division



*South-facing section of Test Pit 10, Area B, showing peat deposit 104
and lacustrine clay 105 below. Scales are 1.0m in 0.5m segments.*

**GGAT report no. 2001/030
Project no. A662
Site no. 437
Dyfed SMR Project Record Number 42677**

National Grid Reference: SN 3870 1930

Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd.
Ferry-side Warehouse, Bath Lane, Swansea SA1 1RD
Tel. 01792 655208; Fax 01792 474469
Registered Charity no. 505609
www.ggat.org.uk



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areas covered by watching brief

Jenny,

this was 'given' to me by misrave

Cheers

Jo xxx

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Glamorgan-Gwent
Archaeological Trust
Limited
Heathfield House
Heathfield
Swansea SA1 6EL
Tel: (01792) 655208
Fax: (01792) 474469

With Compliments



Summary

GGAT Contracts undertook a watching brief in two archaeologically sensitive areas during the construction of a grade separated junction on the A40 road at Traveller's Rest, Carmarthenshire. No archaeologically-significant deposits were identified during the groundworks.

A small assemblage of artefacts recovered from deposits of topsoil attest to post-medieval and modern activity in the area, and requires post-excavation analysis. Samples were taken from organic deposits in the vicinity of Llanllwch Pool for subsequent palaeoenvironmental analysis.

A further watching brief will be required during any additional groundworks in both archaeologically sensitive areas.

Acknowledgements

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

A new grade separated junction is being constructed on the A40 road at Traveller's Rest, Carmarthenshire, centred at SN 3870 1930. An archaeological assessment (Page 1997a) had been prepared as part of an Environmental Assessment on the impact of this development. This assessment identified a number of archaeological interests which would require mitigatory works during the construction process. A watching brief was subsequently undertaken during a programme of geotechnical test-pitting in the vicinity of Llanllwch Pool, and confirmed that important palaeoenvironmental deposits were present in the area (Page 1997b).

Thyssen Construction Ltd subsequently commissioned the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd, Contracts Division (GGAT Contracts) to undertake a programme of archaeological work.

The required works comprised a watching brief at two sites, along the presumed line of a Roman road (PRN 14277) (Area A) and in the vicinity of Llanllwch Pool (Area B). A programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling was also required at Llanllwch Pool. It was not possible to undertake a field evaluation on the site of Kennel Cottages (PRN 34424) as recommended by Page (1997a, 11), as a new access road had been constructed on the site following the original archaeological assessment.

This report is an interim statement on fieldwork which was undertaken between 11th January and 2nd March 2001.

1.2 Archaeological background

There is no known evidence for prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the development area. Llanllwch Bog, 0.5km to the southwest of the development area, is a raised bog which has developed in a drying Holocene lake. Palynological analysis of Llanllwch Bog determined that it contained a pollen record dating back to the Neolithic period. The pollen sequence records a series of episodes of woodland clearance which have been tentatively dated to the Bronze Age. Only two radiocarbon dates were determined from mid-sequence in the palynological record, therefore the analysis can only be used to suggest general patterns and changes in landscape use (Page 1997a, 5, 12 quoting Thomas 1965).

A Roman fort was established at Carmarthen in *circa* 75-78 AD, alongside which developed a civilian settlement (*vicus*). Following the abandonment of the fort in around 120-130AD, the settlement developed into the *civitas* capital of the Demetae, the local indigenous tribe, and was known as *Moridunum*. The town declined after the complete withdrawal of Roman troops in the early part of the 5th century AD, and was eventually replaced by a settlement outside the east gate (Page 1997a, 12-13).

A Roman road was identified on aerial photographs in the early 1980s, extending west from Carmarthen to Llawhaden (James 1990). Excavation along the line of this road at Whitland, 15km east of the development area, determined that substantial remains of the road had survived at this point (Page 1996; 2000). The line of the road has been established between Traveller's Rest and Wiston, but despite good aerial photographic coverage, the road could not be identified within the development area (Page 1997a, 6).

During the medieval period, a castle was established at Carmarthen, and by the 13th century the town had become the administrative centre for judicial and financial matters for south Wales. The area around the development was part of the demesne lands of Carmarthen Castle, and was primarily used for agriculture (James 1980, 28). The farm of Glynsiw (PRN 34977), located approximately 0.5km southwest of Llanllwch Pool, at SN 3810 1895, had been established by the 14th century (Page 1997a, 6).

During the later medieval period the area was badly affected by both disease and conflict. In the later 1340s it is recorded that the Black Death had killed all but one tenant at Llanllwch, and that the surrounding land remained waste and uncultivated. In 1407 Llanllwch and its surrounding meadows were attacked and totally burned during the Welsh uprising led by Owain Glyn Dwr (James 1980, 30).

Settlement gradually increased in the area during the post-medieval period, and a small complex of cottages, known as Kennel Cottages (PRN 34424) is shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6" to 1 mile map of 1890, located on the road between Traveller's Rest and Llanllwch, at SN 3835 1913. Later developments include the construction of the Great Western Railway in the latter part of the 19th century (Barrie 1994, 230-232), the construction of residential and industrial buildings, particularly around Traveller's Rest, Llanllwch and Cillefwr, and the upgrading and widening of the A40 road (Page 1997a, 14).

2. Methodology

A watching brief was maintained during groundworks in the two archaeologically sensitive areas (Area A and Area B). The groundworks were undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. When stratified archaeological deposits were encountered, they were cleaned by hand, within the constraints of health and safety considerations, and recorded.

A full written, drawn and photographic record was made of all archaeological deposits, in accordance with the GGAT *Manual of Excavation Recording Techniques*. Contexts were recorded using a single continuous numbering system, and are summarised in Appendix I. All significant contexts were photographed in 35mm colour transparency and monochrome film.

All classes of finds were retained, cleaned and catalogued, in accordance to the GGAT *Manual of Excavation Recording Techniques*, and are temporarily stored in stable conditions following the UK Institute of Conservation *Guidelines for the Treatment of Finds from Archaeological Sites*. An inventory of these artefacts is presented in Appendix II. When substantial quantities of modern material were recovered, an on-site policy of record and discard was implemented.

The management of environmental recording and sampling followed the principles and tenets laid down in the Association for Environmental Archaeology's draft *Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology*. Deposits with a high potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental material were sampled within the constraints of health and safety considerations, by column and bulk method, for subsequent analysis. Specialist advice on sampling was sought from the Palaeoenvironmental Research Centre, University of Wales, Lampeter. An inventory of samples is presented in Appendix III.

3. Results

3.1 Area A

A watching brief was undertaken in this area, as the proposed line of the Carmarthen to Llawhaden Roman road passed through the development area at this point. No archaeologically-significant deposits were identified during groundworks in this area. Deposits of turf and topsoil, approximately 0.20m deep, were removed, below which were natural subsoil deposits. Whilst intensive agricultural activity may have removed any traces of above-ground archaeological deposits associated with the Roman road, the lack of any negative archaeological features, such as associated roadside ditches, suggests that the line of the Roman road did not cross through this area. An assemblage of artefacts recovered from the topsoil (context 101) relate to post-medieval and modern activity in the area.

3.2 Area B

A watching brief was carried out during geotechnical test pitting and construction works in the vicinity of Llanllwch Pool. Deposits of organic peat and clay were identified across the entire area, some of which included preserved fragments of wood and vegetation. The depth of the test pits and unstable nature of the excavated deposits precluded a detailed record of these test pits. The deposits in only one test pit (TP10) could be safely recorded (contexts 102-105) and a monolith sample (*002 and *003) was taken through a peat deposit (context 104) in this test pit. Bulk samples were recovered from organic-rich deposits excavated in other test pits for comparative analysis.

4. Conclusions

The watching brief did not identify any archaeologically-significant remains during groundworks within Area A or Area B. It is probable that the line of the Roman road did not cross Area A. The palaeoenvironmental potential of organic clay and peat deposits in Area B is clear, and the possibility remains that archaeological deposits are preserved, as yet unexcavated, in the area. Additional groundworks may reveal archaeologically-significant deposits, and a watching brief should be maintained during any additional groundworks in Area A or B.

A programme of post-excavation analysis should also be implemented. The artefactual assemblage requires full analysis and interpretation. An appropriate programme of palaeoenvironmental analysis of samples should be undertaken, in consultation with the Palaeoenvironmental Research Centre, University of Wales, Lampeter. This will facilitate a fuller interpretation of the watching brief results, and allow these results to be viewed within the context of the changing landscape of the region.

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Appendix I

Inventory of contexts

Context	Location	Type	Depth (m)	Description
101	Area A	Deposit	0.0-0.20	Turf and topsoil
102	Area B, TP10	Deposit	0.0-0.25	Topsoil
103	Area B, TP10	Deposit	0.25-0.60	Alluvial clay
104	Area B, TP10	Deposit	0.60-1.40	Organic silt/peat
105	Area B, TP10	Deposit	1.40-n.b.	Lacustrine clay
201	Area B	Deposit	0.0-0.25	Turf and topsoil
202	Area B	Deposit	0.25-0.85	Loamy peat
203	Area B	Deposit	0.85-1.85	Fibrous peat
204	Area B	Deposit	1.85-1.95	Lens of peat
205	Area B	Deposit	1.85-1.95	Lens of silt
206	Area B	Deposit	1.85-2.05	Sandy silt
207	Area B	Deposit	2.05-n.b.	Lacustrine clay

Key:

nb: not bottomed

Appendix II

Inventory of artefacts

Context	Location	Material	Quantity	Date/description
001	Area A	CBM	2	Undated
001	Area A	Clay pipe	6	Post-medieval, stem fragments
001	Area A	Fe object	2	Undated, probably nail shanks
001	Area A	Flint	1	Undated, probably unworked
001	Area A	Glass	1	Post-medieval
001	Area A	Pottery	31	Post-medieval and modern
Total	-	-	43	-

Appendix III

Inventory of environmental samples

Sample	Location	Context	Type	Description
001	Area B, TP03	-	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
002	Area B, TP10	104	Monolith	Pollen profile
003	Area B, TP10	104	Monolith	Pollen profile
004	Area B, TP10	104	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
005	Area B, TP10	104	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
006	Area B	203	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
007	Area B	203	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
008	Area B	202	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
009	Area B	203	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
010	Area B	204	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
011	Area B	205	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
012	Area B	206	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
013	Area B	207	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
014	Area B	203	Bulk	Sample of organic silt
015	Area B	203	Bulk	Sample of organic silt

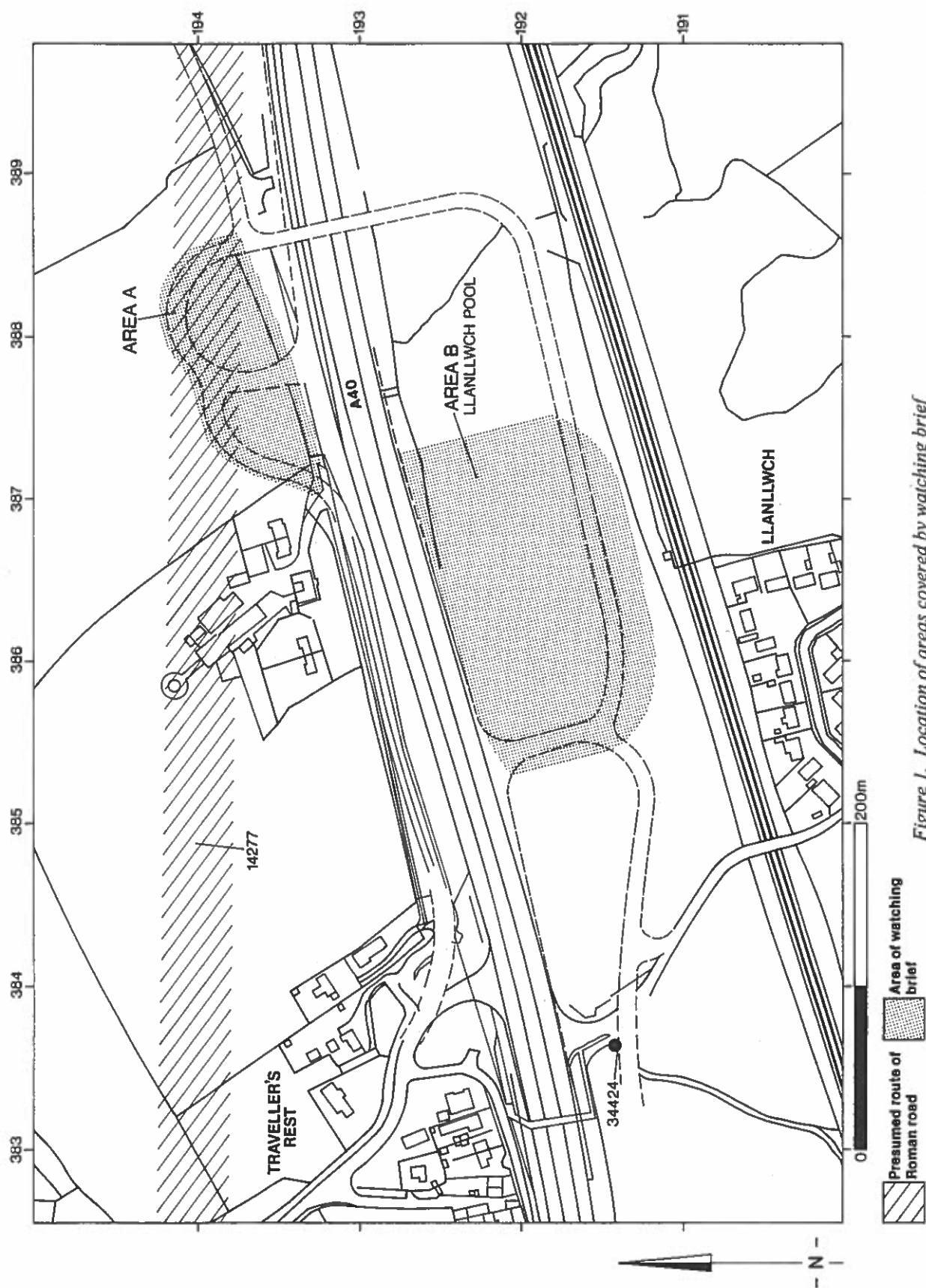


Figure 1. Location of areas covered by watching brief

