

CAE CLAS, GELLILYDAN
WATCHING BRIEF OF A SECTION
ACROSS THE ROMAN ROAD

REPORT NO. 49^a

1126.01

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

CAE GLAS, GELLILYDAN
WATCHING BRIEF OF A SECTION
ACROSS THE ROMAN ROAD

for Dwr Cymru: Welsh Water

by R.S.Kelly
illustrations by H. Riley

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 49

Watching brief of a section across the Roman Road at Cae Glas, Gellilydan.

Brief and methods

In September 1992 Gwynedd Archaeological trust was requested by Welsh Water to conduct a watching brief during pipeline replacement work between Cae Glas Service Reservoir and the A470 trunk road, at Gellilydan, Gwynedd. The route of the pipeline ran due west from the reservoir cutting at right angles the known line of the Roman Road (GAT PRN 3843) running north west from the fort at Tomen-y-Mur to Segontium (Caernarfon), at SH 6954 3951 (Fig. 1 Top).

The 1.25m deep, machine-dug pipe trench followed the line of the existing pipeline and its sides were cleaned by hand where it crossed the line of the road which was still visible as a hollow-way to the north and south. The north side, that is, the south-facing section of the trench was photographed and a sketch section drawn of the features revealed, which were largely absent in the opposite, south side (Fig. 2). More detailed recording was not possible owing to the time available and the waterlogged condition of the trench.

Results

The section confirmed the existence of the Roman road but in a poorly preserved state which was probably the result of several factors. The construction of the original pipeline had cut across and damaged the road and its line was overlain by an abandoned farm track, constructed of chippings, which occupied the hollow-way running to the now disused and ruinous, derelict farmhouse c.100m to the north. The road was also crossed at this point by the existing track to Cae Glas farm.

Given these factors the Roman road seems to have comprised a surface layer of pebbles laid on a foundation of levelled, large, flat stone blocks (c.1.5 - 2.0m wide overall) set into onto a hard bed of concreted, gritty grey-green clay at a depth of c.0.45 - 0.50m. Many similar stone blocks were visible in the make-up of a dry stone wall c.1.7m to the west of and running parallel to the Roman road.

The very slight traces of a possible shallow ditch, c.1m wide and 0.2m deep, could be seen in the section approximately 1.4m west of the road and partially underlying the line of the dry stone wall. This could be contemporary with the Roman road, but only further investigation would have provided an answer and no trace of a comparable ditch was found on the opposite, east side.

Although badly preserved, the evidence indicates that the road *agger* (bank) was narrow but of a standard Roman width at 10-12ft, overlying a well-made, solid foundation of stone blocks. Roman roads were usually less substantially-built, in remote upland areas where traffic was light, but the utilisation of solid foundations on this section between Tomen-y-Mur and the Dwyryd valley to the north could reflect the heavy use and wear anticipated by the regular movement of goods and materials to and from Tomen-y-Mur by river.

The original site records have been deposited with the Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Garth Road, Bangor, LL57 2SE.

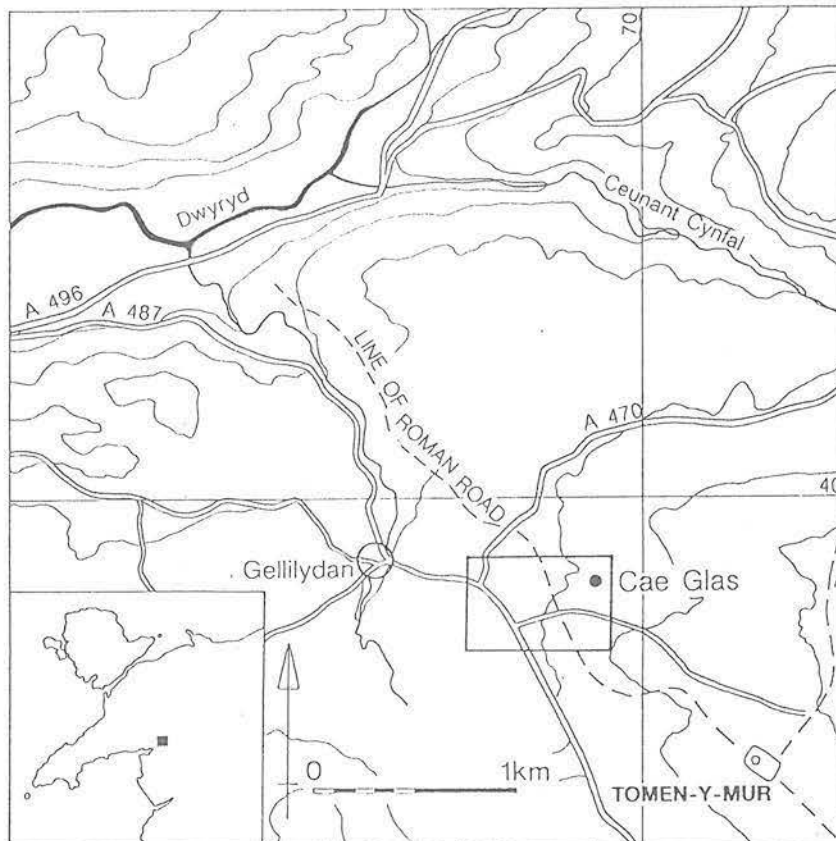


Fig. 1 Location of Cae Glas & section.

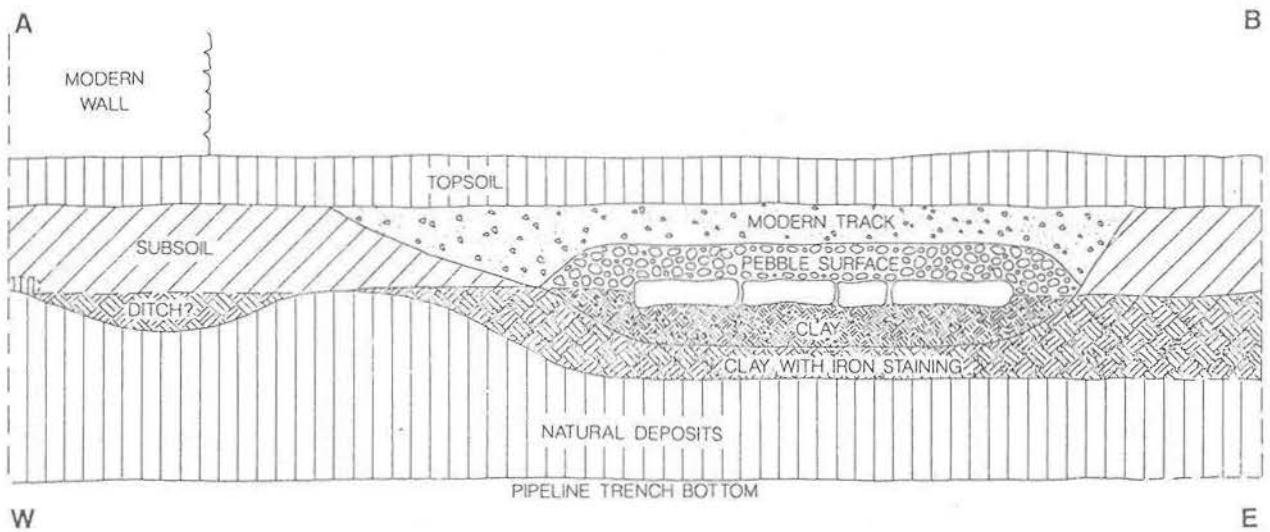


Fig. 2 Sketch section, roman road - Cae Glas, Gellilydan.

