

PENRHYNDEUDRAETH TO RHYD,  
LINK MAIN & PUMPING STATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

REPORT 114

91211

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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prepared for  
Welsh Water PLC.

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**Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 114 (GAT No. 1211)**

# **PENRHYNDEUDRAETH TO RHYD LINK MAIN & WATER PUMPING STATION**

## **PROJECT GAT1211 WATCHING BRIEF REPORT - July 18 1994**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

Welsh Water proposes to build a link main and water pumping station between Penrhyndeudraeth and the existing reservoir at Ogof Llechwyn above Rhyd. The Planning Advice section was consulted by Welsh Water and identified the archaeological implications of the proposal. The stretch of works between Rhyd and the reservoir on the slope appeared to contain the greatest potential for the disturbance of archaeological remains. No known archaeological sites were directly affected by the proposed work, but there are several known sites of hut circles and enclosures in the vicinity of the proposed works and the likelihood is that others remain undiscovered in this area. With these considerations in mind, it was recommended that a watching brief be carried out along the line of the proposed development to identify and record any threatened features. The Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Contracts Section was subsequently commissioned by Welsh Water to carry out this work.

### **2. AIMS AND METHODS**

The area was visited for two half-days by two members of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust's staff, on the 24th and 25th of March 1994. The visits to enable the recording by photography, drawn plans and sections, and written record of any archaeological remains.

### **3. OBSERVATIONS**

The contractor's excavations for the pipe trench excavation proceeded along a 15m wide corridor, with the topsoil first being removed for the width of the trench, and then the trench being dug down to a depth of 0.95m, this trench varied in width between 0.90m and 1.4m due to occasional collapse. The contexts revealed varied due to the topography of the area, there being a waterlogged section in the low lying area surrounding the Afon Rhyd where a peat deposit had formed.

To the Rhyd-side of this peaty area, the topsoil, a silty band, overlay a mid to light grey clay which dipped down into the shallow river valley where the aforementioned peat band had formed above it. On average a 2:1 ratio of peat to clay was seen in the side of the 0.95m depth of the trench. Sandwiched between these two layers were patches of medium to small size boulders. Piles of smaller stones were observed amongst the spoil which had been placed to the sides of the trench in these areas. All this would appear to be natural, with river wash being the most likely cause.

Where the Afon Rhyd valley rose again to the north, the peat layer died out, approximately half-way along the observed stretch, as did the grey clay. These were replaced by a grey brown gritty clay, a band of topsoil above,disap the slope where it reached an area of large boulders (3) which had a fieldwall running along the same east-west orientation, visible on the surface (see below).

Adjacent to this area on a level patch below it to the south, was a ruinous mortared stone building, and this may have a bearing on the depth of the wall's foundation (see 2 below).

Beyond the boulders, the stratigraphy changed again to a light brown sandy clay visible the full depth of the trench (except for a narrow strip of topsoil remaining above it which was slightly more sandy than previously observed). At this point, a water pipe was struck and pierced approximately 20m north of the aforementioned fieldwall, causing a delay to

excavation, and indicating, as the pipe was running roughly parallel to the new trench, that the present ground had been disturbed at an earlier date. A fieldwalk of the rest of the length of the trench's route was therefore undertaken. The fieldwalk identified another fieldwall in the line of the trench (see 4 below), which had already been breached at some earlier time.

#### **4. FEATURES DETAILED**

The fieldwall and its boulder foundation (3) mentioned in the previous section was unusual because of the substantial depth the boulders lay at. This depth may be due to the boulders in fact being placed here by geological action and then utilised as a foundation for the wall, or there may be some reason not now clearly definable why such a substantial support was required.

There were three other man-made features along the path of the corridor. The first, that is the one nearest to Rhyd itself, and therefore encountered first during excavation, was a field-drain (1). Unremarkable, except for the fact it emphasises the boggy waterlogged nature of the southern part of the development corridor.

The second feature was not touched by the trench, but was in the corridor. It being the building (2) already mentioned above. This is a rectangular free-standing mortared stone structure, 9m in length and 7m in width. It stands roughly 3m high to the base of the gable ends, which themselves reach to a pinnacle of a further 1.5m, though one is partially collapsed. The building originally had two storeys, though it is now a hollow shell with no roof or ceilings remaining. However, there is a stack of slate roof tiles at the rear of the building which presumably belonged to this structure.

The one entrance to the interior on the southeast side measures 1.1m in width, and 1.9m high. There is also a window to the rear of the building, on the northwest side opposite the entrance, which is at the level of the gable. The dimensions for the window are 1.2m square. The exterior ground level adjacent to this window is only 1.0m below the sill. The rise in the level of the ground occurs as a rough step up 6m from the front to the rear of the building (southeast to northwest). The structure's walls are 0.6m thick, made up of undressed mortared stone. A structure is marked on the modern OS 1:10000 located about 45m west of the approximate position of 2, but it is identified as a sheepfold.

The final feature identified is a drystone fieldwall (4) which had already been truncated through the middle though the present trench had not yet reached this point. The wall remaining reaches a height of 1.1m, and is 0.75m thick, the section removed represented a 2m wide stretch.

#### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

No finds were recovered, and the only features disturbed by the development were the fieldwalls mentioned. Though any loss is regrettable, these features remain sufficiently intact to provide information about their construction, use and location.



