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A487 PONT SEIONT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

REPORT NO. 148

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

A487 PONT SEIONT

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prepared for Welsh Office Highways Directorate

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1. INTRODUCTION

As part of its scheme to upgrade the A487 Bangor - Fishguard Trunk Road, the Welsh Office is proposing improvements to Pont Seiont, Caernarfon. The intention is to build a replacement bridge across the Seiont River between the existing road and the former railway bridges. This will connect the existing South Road, Caernarfon to the A487 N of Bontnewydd. The new bridge will be built across a fairly deep natural valley, and will involve constructing substantial embankments on the flood plain either side of the Afon Seiont.

L. G. Mouchel and Partners, on behalf of Welsh Office Highways Directorate have asked Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to carry out photographic recording of specific features in advance of construction of the new road.

2. BACKGROUND

The Welsh Office commissioned an archaeological evaluation of the area to be disturbed, and the results of this evaluation were presented in Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 66. This report identified a number of sites which, if they were to be disturbed, required recording in advance. The sites identified were:

1. Railway embankment and bridge The bridge over the Seiont forming part of the Caernarfon - Afonwen line, constructed c. 1864 and its associated embankments.

2. Railway embankment and bridge A small bridge and embankment forming part of the Caernarfon - Llanberis line.

11. Pool A sunken rectangular brick built structure measuring 5 m by 2.5 m.

13. Iron bridge An iron bridge carrying the Caernarfon - Pwllheli road over the Llanberis line.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust have been asked to record sites 2, 11 and 13, and the embankment immediately north of where the Afonwen line crosses the Afon Seiont.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Photographic Record

All photographs were taken on 35 mm black and white film (Kodak Tmax 400 ASA). The following approach was adopted where possible.

(i) A small series of general views to place the structure in context to its setting and other buildings, using a 50 mm lens where possible, and a 28 mm lens where necessary;

(ii) Views of all accessible external elevations taken as close to a 90 degree angle to each elevation as possible using a 28 mm shift lens to avoid problems of vertical parallax;

(iii) Views of architectural details, using a longer focal length lens where necessary.

All elevation views contain at least one 2.0 m scale marked into 0.5 m sections.

All views have been recorded on photographic record sheets (Appendix 1), which give the film number, negative number, description and date, with a viewing location number. The location of each view has been located on a plan (fig. 2) using the viewing location number as identification.

Selected views have also been taken on Kodachrome ASA 200 colour transparency film, also listed on photographic record sheets, but not located on the plan so as to avoid confusion.

The negatives and a copy of the report will be housed in the County Sites and Monuments Record, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, and available for public inspection.

3.2 Written description

The essential details and measurements of each site was noted, so that each site could be described, the description in each case being designed to amplify and enhance the photographic record. In addition, the existing literature was searched to help place each site in its historical setting.

4.0 SITE DESCRIPTIONS

1. Railway embankment and bridge (Afonwen line)

The section of the Afonwen - Caernarfon railway line from Pant station (just south of the Afon Seiont) to Caernarfon station was built in 1869-70, and was officially opened in July 1870. The construction of this section of the line took place just after the Caernarfonshire Railway was taken over by the LNWR, and it seems likely that the engineer was Hedworth Lee, appointed by LNWR as engineer to the Caernarfon and Llanberis lines in 1869. The line was closed on the 5th February, 1972.

The line is carried across the Seiont by a stone bridge of two elliptical arches, with brick parapets: the railway line is approximately 8 m above the river, and the parapets of the bridge are a further 1.0 m high. The line is then carried on an embankment, which varies between 8 and 10 m high, across the flood plain of the Seiont, before dropping slowly down to run alongside St Helen's road. The width of the embankment varies between 40 and 50 m at the base, and is 8 - 10 m wide at the top. The Llanberis line joins the Afonwen line some 140 m below the Seiont bridge, and runs alongside it into Caernarfon.

2. Railway embankment and bridge (Llanberis line)

This railway line was officially opened on 1st July, 1869, by the LNWR, following a protracted construction period of some five years. The line approached Caernarfon from the south-east, passed under the Caernarfon - Pwllheli road which was carried by the bridge identified as site 13 in this report, and rose up to run alongside the Caernarfon - Afonwen line, passing over the small road off St. Helen's road (site 2a) and on to Caernarfon Station. The line closed in 1964, and the track was lifted in 1965.

The bridge (site 2a) is now visible as two stone bridge abutments, with a modern timber bridge across them which carries a footpath. The abutments are 3.9 m high, 5.0 m wide and 3.9 m apart. They are built of unevenly coursed stone blocks, which have been squared and roughly dressed. Flanking revetment walls either side have limestone coping stones finished with a rustic edge, the revetment walls all terminating in square posts with similar limestone coping stones. The joints within the stonework would suggest that the bridge abutments were erected first, and the flanking revetment walls built onto the abutments.

The embankment south of the bridge is approximately 4.0 m high, 16.0 m wide at the base, and 4.0 - 6.0 m wide at the top.

Site 13. Iron bridge

This is the bridge which carries the A487 Caernarfon - Pwllheli road over the Caernarfon - Llanberis railway line. It was erected by the LNWR in 1869, and has on it two plaques each saying "H Owen and Son, Caernarfon, 1869".

The bridge is constructed of two parallel but off-set abutments of coursed stone blocks, each abutment being 10.6 m wide and 4.5 m high, and set 5.0 m apart. The parapets are spanned by 7 equally spaced "H" shaped iron girders, with the "H" horizontal, each 0.5 m thick, and linked by three iron rods. The spaces between the girders are filled with six brick arches, with the springing of the arch resting on the inside lower edge of the "H". There are two brick parapets 1.4 m high, each resting on a narrow band of limestone blocks, with a small stone tower at each end of the parapets.

Site 11. Pool

A rectangular brick-lined pit, with a small extension off the west end. The pit lies some 20 m west of Pont Seiont, and 10 m from the river bank on a waste piece of ground between Orchard House and the river.

The pit measures 5.8 m by 2.5 m internally, with brick walls 26 cm thick. The extension off the east end is 64 cm wide and 110 cm long. The concrete base is 0.9 m below the top of the walls at the west end, 1.0 below at the east end and 0.6 m below within the eastern extension. The top of the walls lie 0.2 m above the surrounding ground surface. Around the north side, between the pit and the river, is a low bank 0.6 m high, assumed to be upcast from the digging of the pit. A copper pipe rises out of the ground on the north side of the extension.

The function of the pit is not known, although it is assumed to have something to do with water storage/useage, and may have been associated with Orchard House. It is unlikely to be more than one hundred years old.

5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Boyd J. I. C., 1981, *Narrow Gauge Railways in N Caernarvonshire: Volume 1 - The West*.
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Rear W. G., 1986, *LMS Branch Lines in North Wales*.

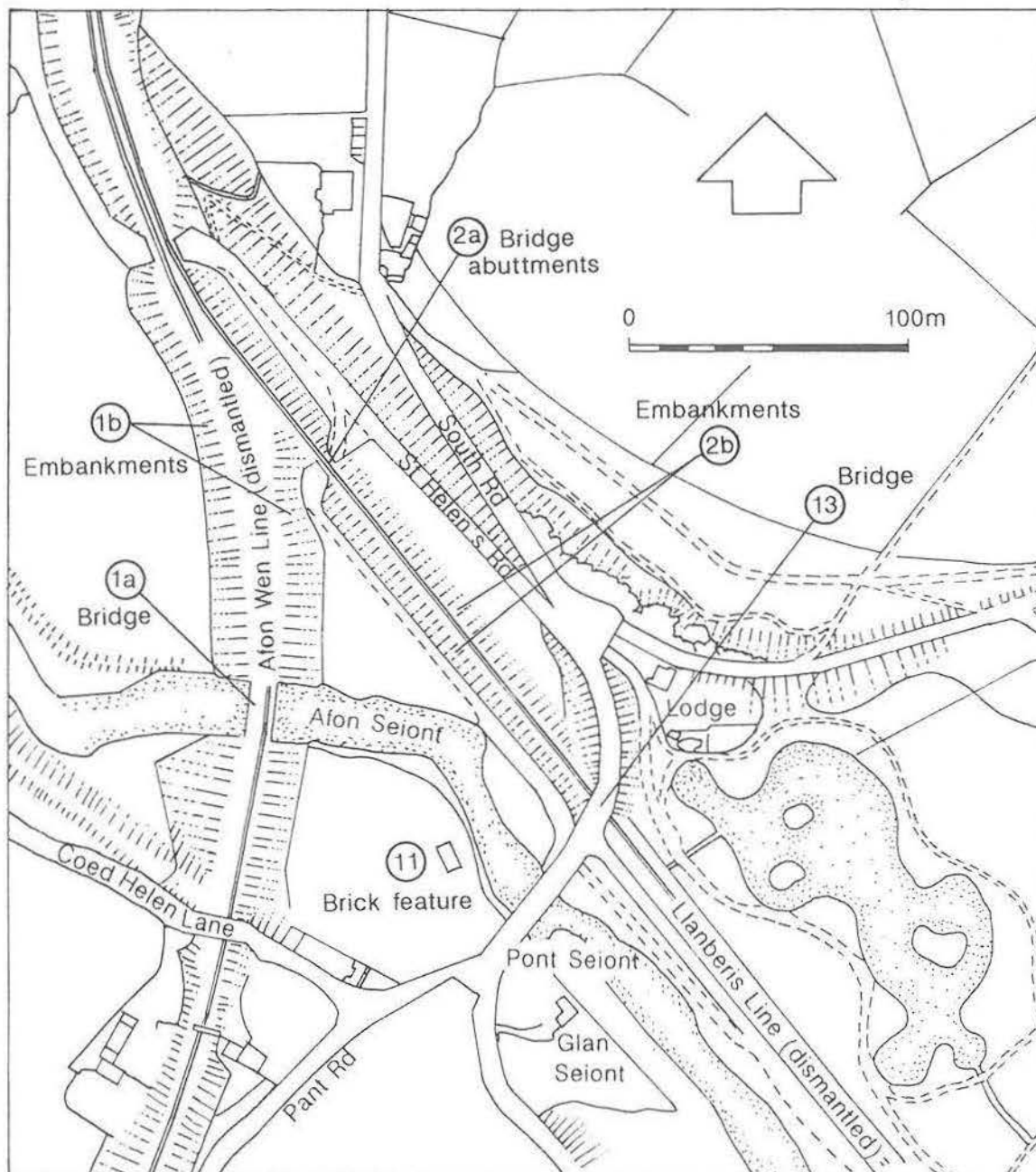
APPENDIX 1

LIST OF BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Film	Neg	Description	Location
1	21	Site 2a, W side	7
1	22	Site 2a, W side	7
1	25	Site 2a, W side	7
1	26	Site 2a, W side	7
1	27	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	28	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	29	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	30	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	31	Site 2a, W side, N revetment wall	7
1	32	Site 2a, W side, N revetment wall	7
1	33	Site 2a, W side, N revetment wall	7
1	34	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	35	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	36	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
1	36A	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
2	1	Site 2a, E side, before clearance	6
2	2	Site 2a, E side, before clearance	6
2	3	Site 2a, E side, N revetment wall	6
2	4	Site 2a, E side, N revetment wall	6
2	5	Junction - Afon Wen and Llanberis lines	2
2	6	Junction - Afon Wen and Llanberis lines	2
2	7	Llanberis line over site 2a	4
2	8	Llanberis line over site 2a	4
2	9	Site 13, E side, before clearance	21
2	10	Site 13, E side, before clearance	21
2	11	Site 13, W side, before clearance	19
2	12	Site 13, E side	21
2	13	Site 13, E side	21
2	14	Site 13, E side	21
2	15	Site 13, E side	21
2	16	Site 13, E side	21
2	17	Site 13, E side	21
2	18	Site 13, E side, N revetment wall	21
2	19	Site 13, E side, detail of plaque	21
2	20	Site 13, E side, showing relationship to S arched revetment wall	20
2	21	South Rd - Pont Seiont	18
2	23	Site 13, roof detail	-
2	26	Site 13, roof detail	-
2	27	Site 13, roof detail	-
2	28	Site 13, roof detail	-
2	29	Site 13, roof detail	-
2	30	Site 13, detail of electrical insulators, W side	19
2	31	Site 13, W side, detail of electrical insulators	19
2	32	Site 13, W side	19
2	33	Site 13, W side	19

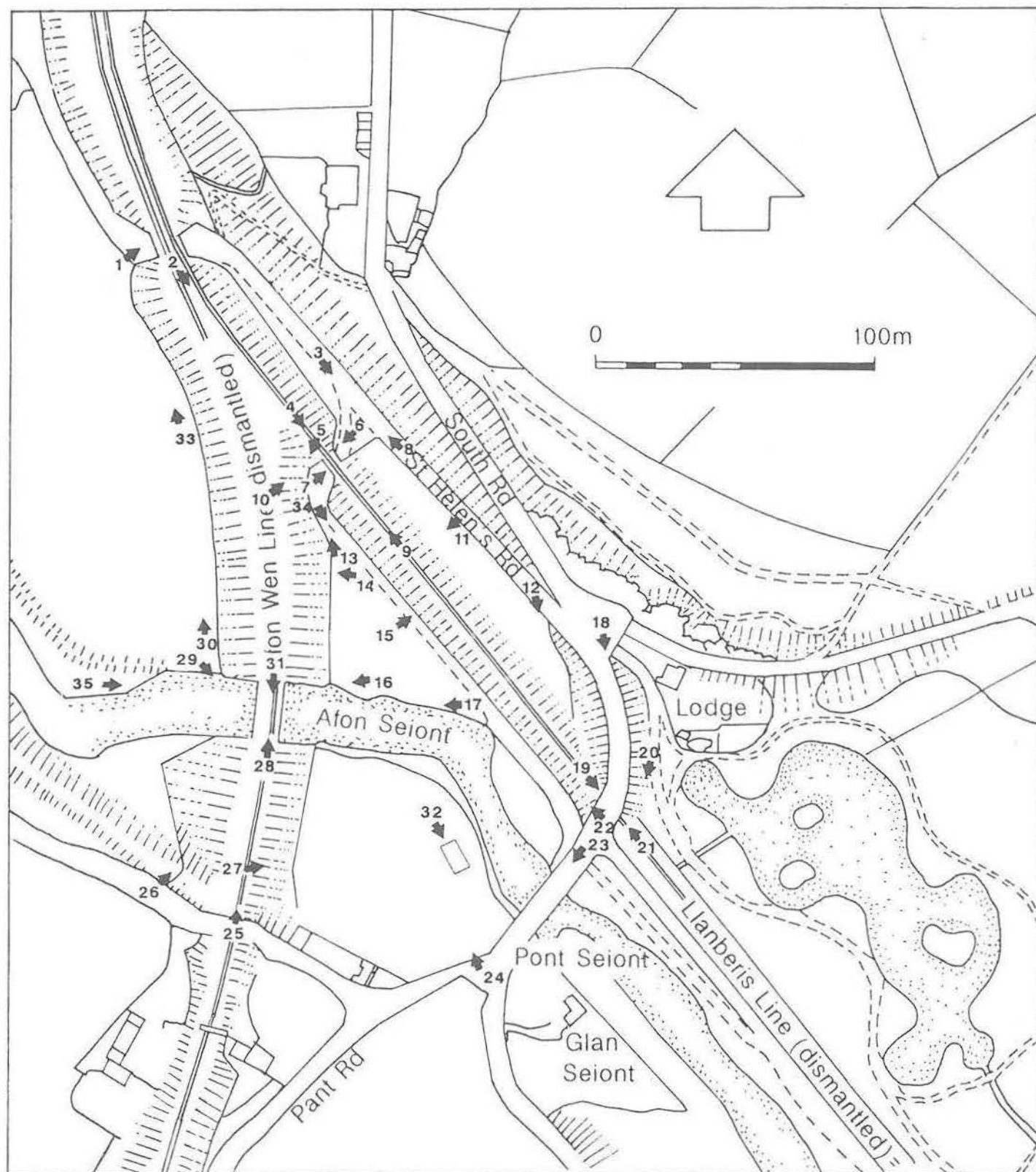
2	34	Site 13, W side, N revetment wall and end pillar	19
2	35	Site 13, W side, N revetment wall and end pillar	19
2	36	Site 13, W side, end pillar detail	19
2	36A	Site 13, W side, detail of plaque	19
3	0	Site 13, W side, stonework detail	19
3	1	Site 13, W side, stonework detail	19
3	2	Site 13, W side, stonework detail	19
3	3	Site 2a, W side, stonework detail	7
3	4	Site 2a, W side, S revetment wall	7
3	5	Site 2a, E side, after clearance	6
3	6	Site 2a, E side, after clearance	6
3	7	Site 2a, E side, S revetment wall	6
3	8	Site 2a, E side, S revetment wall	6
3	9	Site 2a, E side, N revetment wall	6
3	10	Site 2a, E side, N revetment wall	6
3	11	Site 2a, E side, N revetment wall	6
3	12	Site 2a, E side, N inner wall	6
3	13	Site 2a, E side, N inner wall	6
3	14	Site 2a, E side, S inner wall	6
3	15	Site 2a, E side, S inner wall	6
3	16	Site 2a, E side	6
3	17	Site 2a, E side	6
3	18	Site 2a, E side, pillar detail N wall	6
3	19	Site 2a, E side, pillar detail, N wall	6
3	20	Site 1b, E side	5
3	21	Site 1b, E side	5
3	22	Site 1b, E side	14
3	23	Site 1b, E side	13
3	24	Site 1b, E side, detail of side steps	16
3	25	Site 1b, E side	16
3	26	Site 1a, E side	16
3	27	Site 1b, E side	17
3	28	Sites 1a and 1b, E side	17
3	29	Sites 1a and 1b, E side	17
3	30	Site 1b, E side	17
3	31	Site 1a	28
3	32	Site 1a	31
3	33	Site 1a	31
3	34	Site 2a, W side	10
3	35	Site 11	32
3	36	Site 11	32
3	36A	Site 11	32
4	0	Site 11, detail of copper pipe	32
4	1	Site 11, detail of copper pipe	
4	2	Pont Seiont from Afon Wen line	27
4	3	Pont Seiont from Afon Wen line	27
4	4	Pont Seiont from Afon Wen line	27
4	5	Site 2b, W side	34
4	6	General, area between sites 1b and 2b	34
4	7	St Helen's Rd showing entrance to site 2a	3

4	8	St Helen's Rd showing entrance to site 2a	3
4	9	Site 2b, E side	11
4	10	General, Pont Seiont from St Helen's Rd	12
4	11	Site 2b	22
4	12	Site 2b	22
4	13	General, from Pont Seiont	22
4	14	General, from Pont Seiont	22
4	15	Pant Rd junction, from Pont Seiont	23
4	16	General, area around site 11	24
4	17	General, area around site 11	24
4	18	General, area around site 11	24
4	19	Afon Wen line	25
4	20	General, from Coed Helen Lane	
4	21	Site 13, E side, detail of plaque	21
4	22	Site 13, W side, detail of plaque	19
4	23	Llanberis line	9
4	24	General, sites 2a and 2b, W side	4
4	25	Site 1a	29
4	26	Site 2b, W side / 6	30
4	27	Site 1a	35
4	28	Site 2b, W side / 6	33
4	29	Bridge carrying Afon Wen line over St Helen's Rd	1
4	30	St Helen's Rd, showing entrance to site 2a	3
4	31	St Helen's Rd, showing entrance to site 2a	8



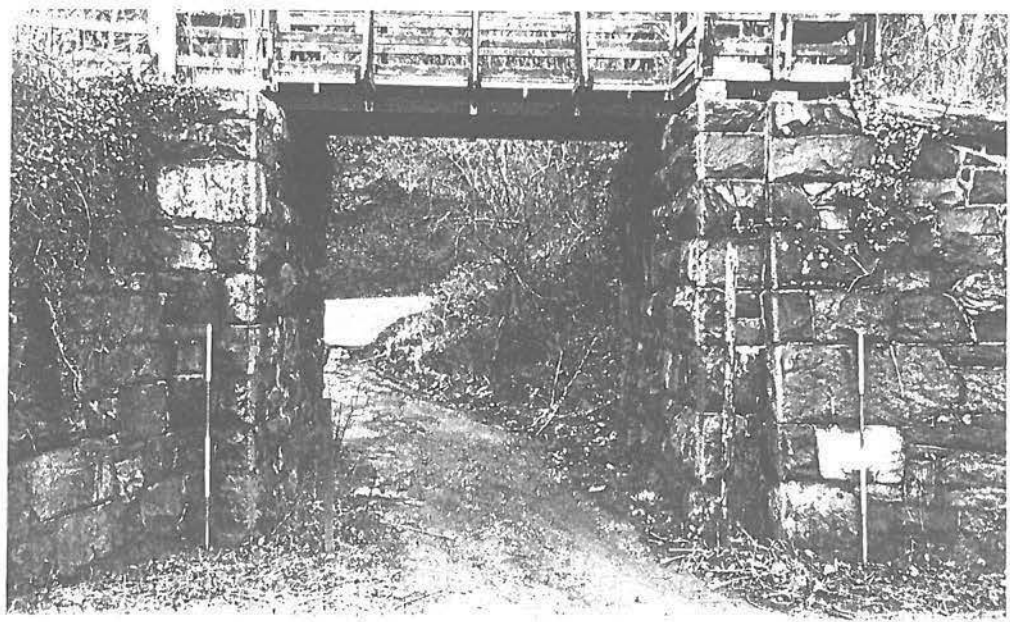
Site locations.

Fig. 1

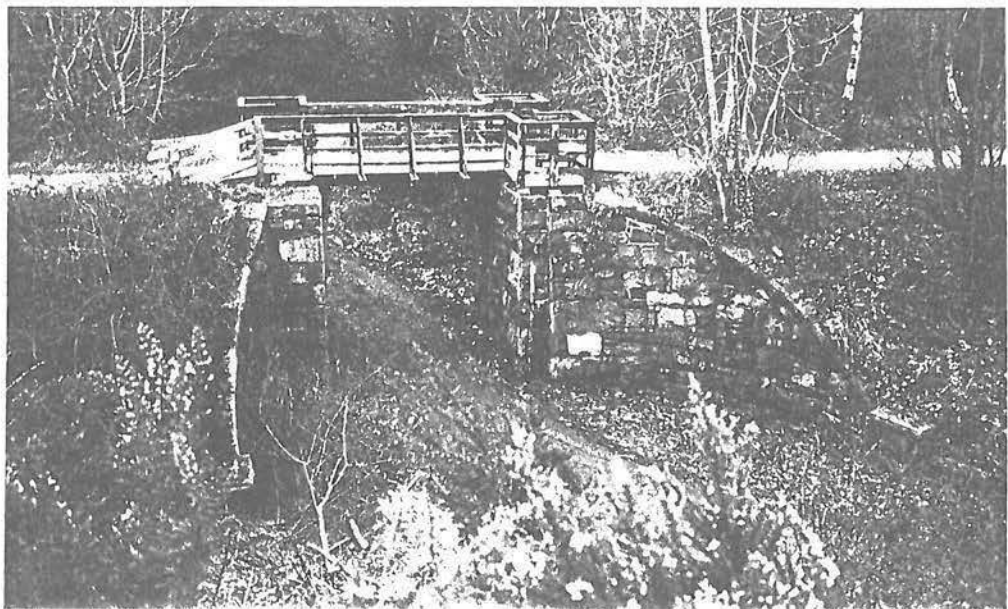


Photographic locations, 1 - 35.

Fig.2



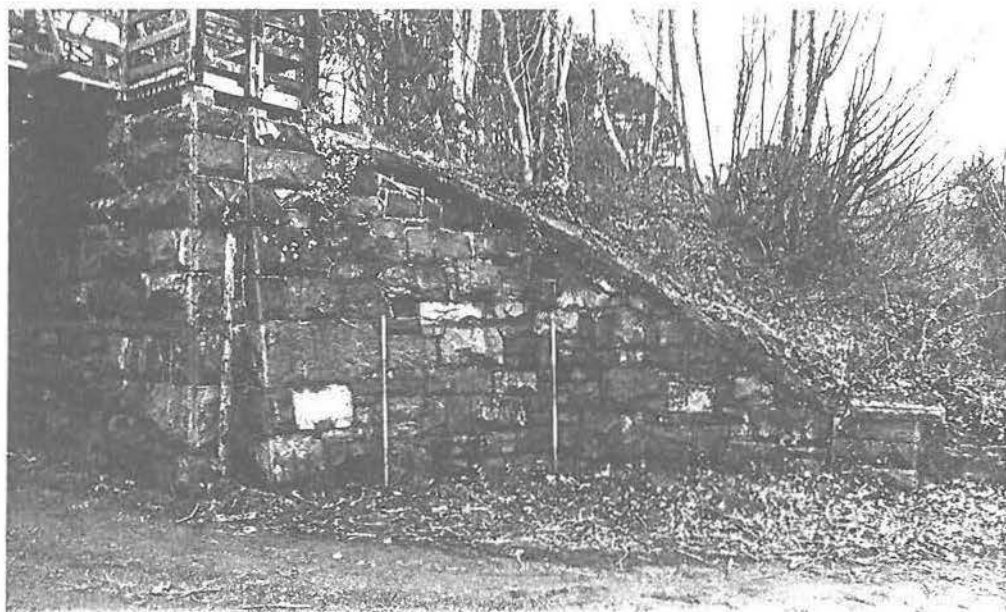
Site 2a: West side (G1312/1/22)



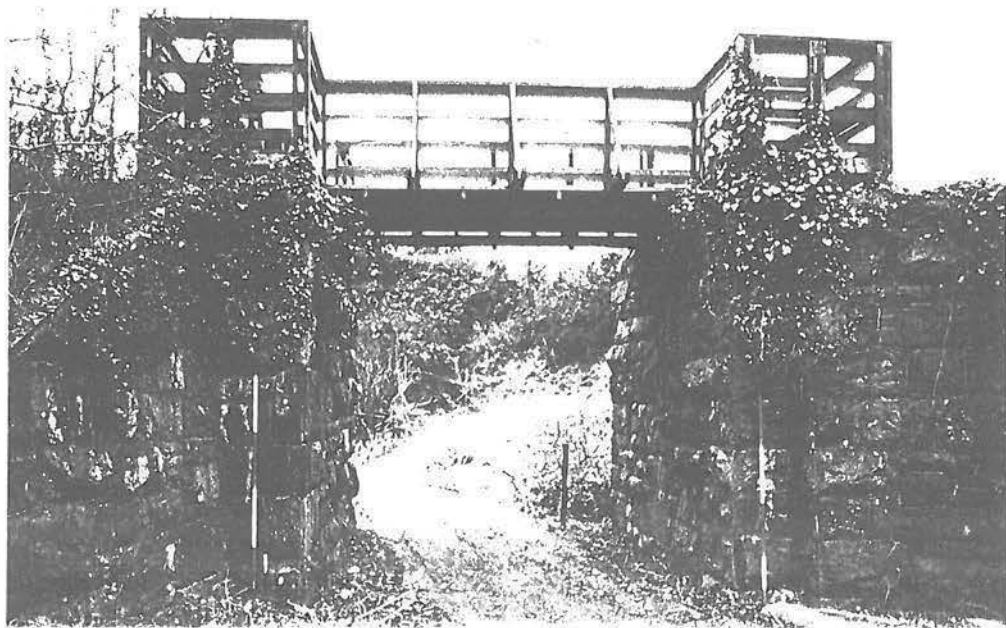
Site 2a: From west (G1312/3/34)



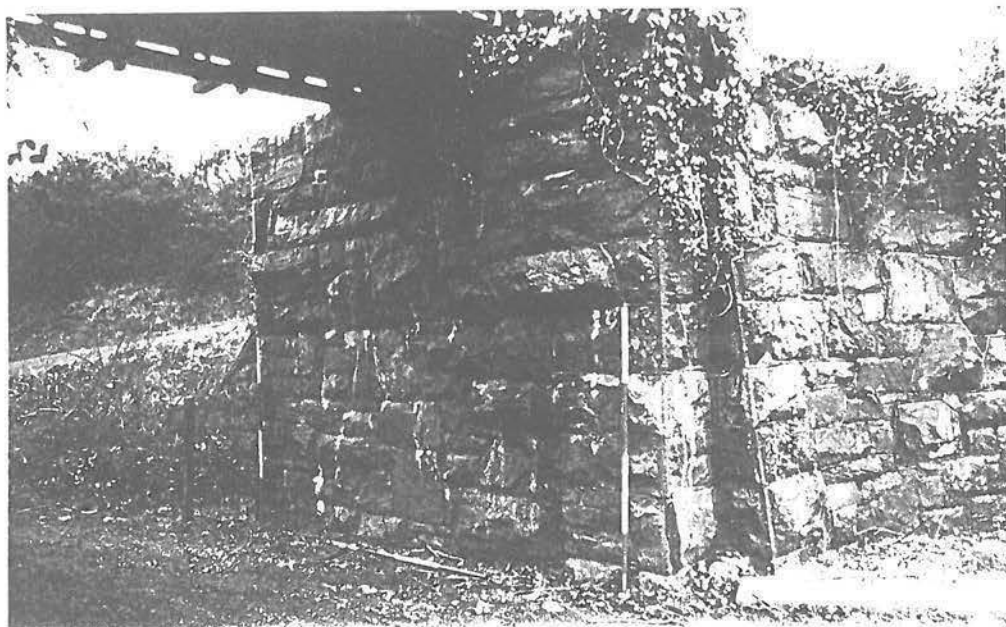
Site 2a: West side with north revetment wall (G1312/1/26)



Site 2a: West side, south revetment wall (G1312/1/34)



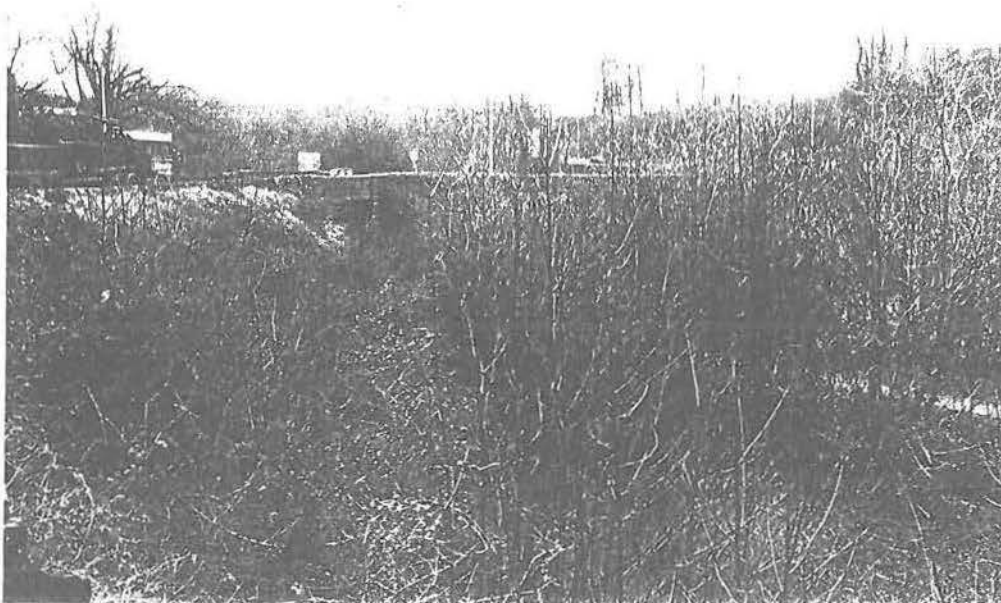
Site 2a: East side (G1312/3/5)



Site 2a: North abutment (G1312/3/12)



Site 2a: Looking north-west over 2a (G1312/4/23)



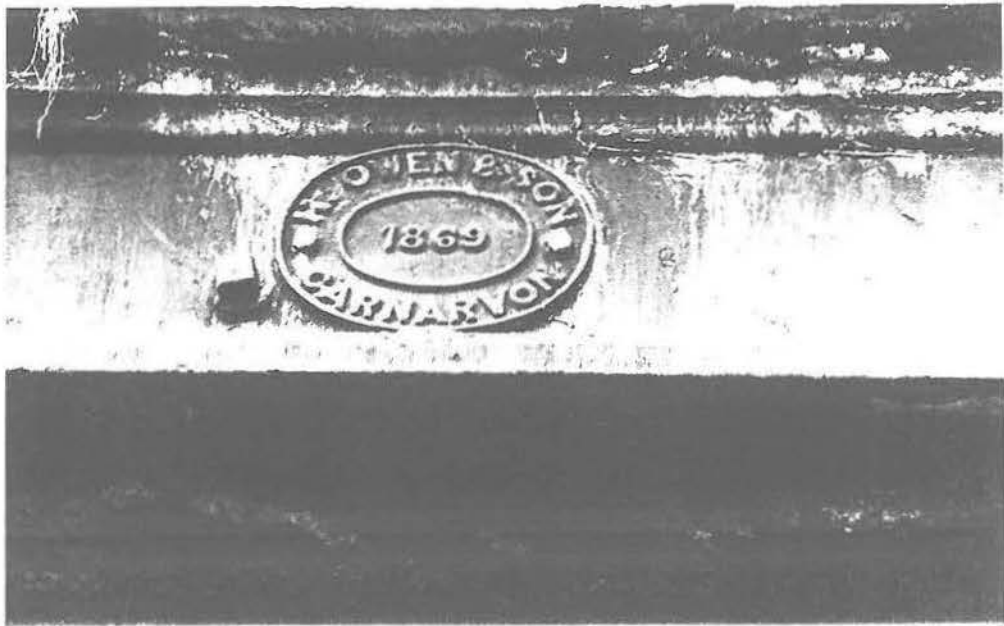
Site 13: General view from north (G1312/4/10)



Site 13: East side (G1312/2/13)



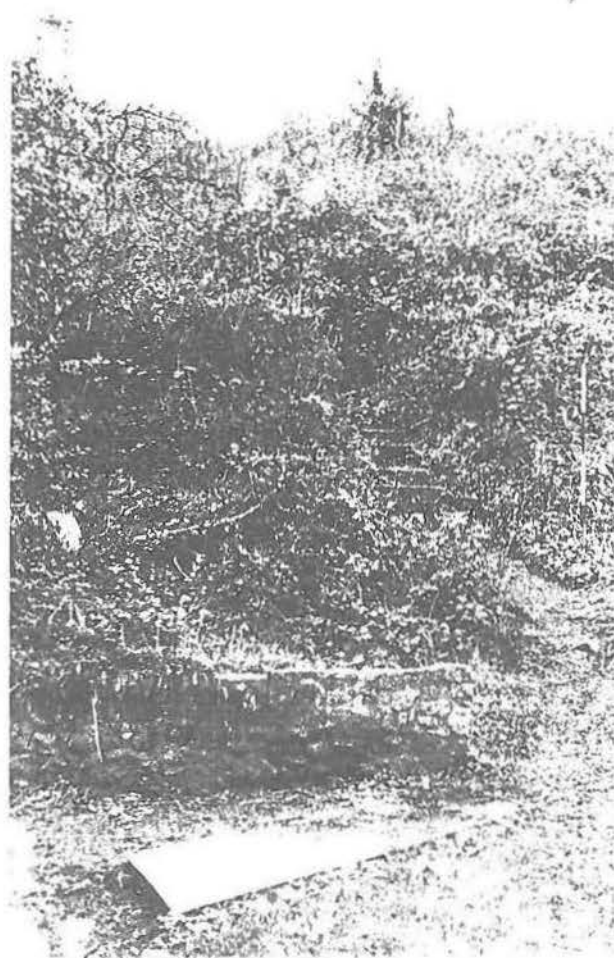
Site 13: West side (G1312/2/32)



Site 13: Detail of plaque, east side (G1312/4/21)



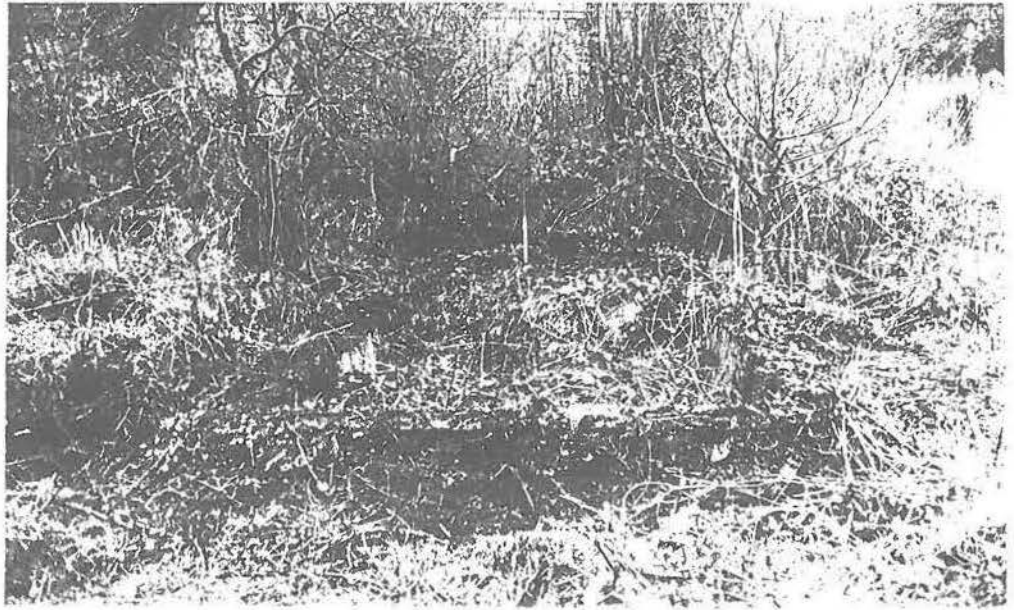
Sites 1a and 1b: East side (G1312/3/28)



Site 1b: East side, alongside Pont Sciont (G1312/3/24)



Site 1b: West side of Afonwen embankment (G1312/4/28)



Site 11: From south-east (G1312/3/35)

