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A470(T) PONT YR AFANC TO
BETWS Y COED IMPROVEMENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1374)

REPORT NO. 189

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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BETWS Y COED IMPROVEMENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT (G1374)

prepared for Wyn Thomas PLC
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A470(T) PONT YR AFANC TO BETWS Y COED IMPROVEMENT

INITIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Welsh Office are proposing to improve the A470 Trunk road north of Blaenau Ffestiniog. An initial archaeological assessment of the proposed improvement was undertaken in 1992, and the results presented in the *A470(T) Blaenau Ffestiniog to Betws-y-coed Road Improvement - Archaeological Assessment - Preliminary Stages 1 and 2 Report* for the Welsh Office Highways Directorate. This 1992 report has now been updated for various sections of the route to take account of changes to the improvement and also the requirements of the *Design Manual For Roads and Bridges Volume 11*. This report contains an archaeological assessment of that part of the A470(T) between a point just east of the ruined Toll house south of Pont yr Afanc and the junction between the A470(T) and the A5(T) at Betws-y-coed

The extent of the area of interest has been taken as a narrow strip (400m) on either side the existing A470(T), and includes alterations to existing side junctions. The route largely encroaches upon river terrace and steeply sloping wooded hillside. The scheme lies within the Snowdonia National Park.

2. ASSESSMENT BRIEF

A report was requested from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, to assess the likely archaeological impact of the proposals and to recommend mitigatory measures.

The requirement was for a desk-top survey and field search of the corridor of interest in order to assess the impact of the proposals on the archaeological and heritage features within the road corridor and close enough to it to be affected. The importance and condition of known archaeological remains were to be assessed and any other areas of archaeological interest to be identified. Measures to mitigate the effects of the road scheme on the archaeological features were to be recommended.

In addition, the assessment was to be carried out in accordance with the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2, Cultural Heritage*, June 1993 (incorporating amendment number 1, August 1994).

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust's proposals for fulfilling these requirements were, briefly, as follows:

- a) to identify and record the cultural heritage of the area to be affected by the proposals;
- b) to evaluate the importance of what was identified (both as a cultural landscape and as the individual items which make up that landscape); and
- c) to recommend ways in which damage to the cultural heritage can be avoided or minimised.

This report covers the work done under the first two stages of assessment, documentary research and walking the route, and includes recommendations for later stages.

N.B. Full details of ancillary areas likely to be affected by the road works, such as vehicle parking and turning areas, materials storage areas etc., have not yet been supplied. Experience shows that these areas are as likely to suffer damage as the actual land-take for the road. If all such areas fall within the corridor of interest, they will have been covered, but in order that all areas affected may be subjected to the same level of survey, any information relating to areas affected outside this should be notified to the Trust as soon as possible.

3. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

3.1 Desk-top Study

Consultation of maps, computer records, written records and reference works, which make up the Sites and Monuments Record, was undertaken at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. Records (including early Ordnance Survey maps, tithe maps and schedules, estate maps and papers and reference works - see bibliography) were also consulted in the library and the archives of the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and the County archive at Caernarfon. Some records relating to the area may be held at the County Archives in Ruthin, but these were not consulted. Aerial photographs of the route were examined during the previous archaeological assessment of 1992; further aerial photographic examination of the area was not carried out, because the wooded nature of the area suggested this technique would not provide useful results.

3.2 Field Search

The field search was undertaken on 2 January 1996. A five metre width was observed on each side of the road, from the existing road. Conditions were generally fine for fieldwork, though a proportion of the land was obscured by dense woodland. Light conditions were adequate.

Sites identified were marked on plans at a scale of 1:500 as accurately as possible without surveying. Forms were filled in assessing each site, and detailed notes made of the more important ones. Photographs were taken of all potential sites identified.

3.3 Report

All available information was collated, and transferred onto a single set of maps at a scale of 1:500. The sites were then assessed and allocated to the categories listed below. These are intended to give an idea of the importance of the site and the level of response likely to be required; descriptions of the sites and specific recommendations for further evaluation or mitigatory measures, as appropriate, are given in the relevant sections of this report.

In some cases, further investigation may result in sites being moved into different categories. The criteria used for allocating sites to categories are based on those used by the Secretary of State when considering ancient monuments for scheduling; these are set out in Annex 3 to Planning Policy Guidance 16 (Wales): Archaeology and Planning.

3.4 Categories

The categories listed below follow the guidelines given in the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2, Paragraph 3.4. The allocation of a site to a category defines the importance of the archaeological resource of that site.

Category A - Sites of national importance.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and sites of schedulable or listable quality, i.e. those which would meet the requirements for scheduling (ancient monuments) or listing (buildings) or both.

Sites which are scheduled or listed have legal protection, and it is recommended that all Category A sites remain preserved and protected *in situ*.

Category B - Sites of regional or county importance.

Sites which would not fulfil the criteria for scheduling or listing, but which are nevertheless of particular importance within the region.

Preservation *in situ* is the preferred option for Category B sites, but if damage or destruction cannot be avoided, appropriate detailed recording might be an acceptable alternative.

Category C - Sites of district or local importance.

Sites which are not of sufficient importance to justify a recommendation for preservation if threatened.

Category C sites nevertheless merit adequate recording in advance of damage or destruction.

Category D - Minor and damaged sites.

Sites which are of minor importance or so badly damaged that too little remains to justify their inclusion in a higher category.

For Category D sites, rapid recording, either in advance or during construction, should be sufficient.

Category E - Sites needing further investigation.

Sites whose importance is as yet undetermined and which will require further work before they can be allocated to categories A - D are temporarily placed in this category, with specific recommendations for further evaluation. By the end of the assessment there should be no sites remaining in this category.

3.5 Definition of Impact

The impact has been defined as none, slight, likely or considerable as follows:

None:

There is no improvement or construction impact on this particular site. (Sites identified as of particular importance are, where possible, avoided by the improvement proposals. Such sites have been identified in the tables).

Slight:

This has generally been used where the impact is marginal and would not by the nature of the site cause irreversible damage to the remainder of the feature, *e.g.* a slate quarry or a track at right angles to the A470(T).

Likely:

In some instances the site in question would not fall within the widened section of road but would fall within the construction area and therefore may subject to its nature be removed or damaged.

Considerable:

The total removal of a feature or its partial removal which would effectively destroy the remainder of the site.

3.6 Definition of Mitigatory Recommendations

The alignment of the proposed improvement avoids as far as possible sites of archaeological interest. Where a site is affected, mitigation measures will be included in accordance with current Welsh Office Highways Directorate policies for rescue archaeology.

For the purposes of this report the mitigation and rescue archaeology proposals as suggested by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust have been summarised as:

None:

No impact so no requirement for mitigation measures.

Detailed recording:

Detailed recording requires a photographic record, surveying and the production of a measured drawing prior to the commencement of the works on site.

Archaeological excavation works may also be required depending upon the particular feature and the extent and effect of the impact. Some of the sites would require dismantling by hand, to provide a detailed record of the method of construction and in the case of a listed structure, the salvage of materials for re-use and re-building.

Recording by photograph and description:

Recording by photograph and description requires a photographic record and survey work prior to the commencement of works on site. A measured drawing may be required in certain cases.

Watching brief:

At the commencement of the improvement works on site, all sites affected by the works would need to be observed up to the end of the contract period.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

Archive material consulted during the desk-top study proved useful for providing date evidence for some sites (e.g. Coed-y-celyn House, pre-1838, rear range dated 1874, Pont yr Afanc c. 1802, A470(T) north of Pont yr Afanc c. 1818). However tithe map coverage within the archives was not complete, and no estate records were held by Caernarfon Record Office or University of Wales Bangor. It is probable that the land was once part of the Gwydir Estate, the archives of which are retained by the family in Lincolnshire.

Lists supplied by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments were used to obtain information about listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments. There are no scheduled ancient monuments in the area of the scheme. However four listed structures, all Grade II, are located in the vicinity of the works: Pont yr Afanc bridge, Coed-y-celyn House, the Lodge at Coed-y-celyn and the gates and railings at the main driveway entrance to Coed-y-celyn House.

No new sites were identified during the fieldwork stage, but further details were obtained for the sites identified during the desktop stage.

4.2 The Archaeological Background

4.2.1 Prehistoric and Roman (up to 400AD)

There are no known settlement or burial sites of the prehistoric period within the corridor of interest. To the north of the area at Coedfa two Neolithic Graig Lwyd stone axes were found in 1880. It is likely that the fertile valley bottom would have been used for farming during the latter part of this period.

There are no known Roman sites within the corridor; the nearest site of this period is the fort at Bryn y Gyfeiliau, and its associated Roman road of Sarn Helen which passes through the Lledr valley connecting Bryn y Gyfeiliau with Caerhun.

4.2.2 Medieval and later (400AD - today)

The area lies within the Medieval *cantref* of Arllechwedd, and the *commote* of Nantconwy, and straddled the border between the old counties of Caernarvonshire and Denbighshire. Little detailed information has survived regarding the immediate area from the Medieval or Post-Medieval era. The land appears to have formed part of the township of Betws, but is likely to have been largely wooded, and a small parcel of Ancient Woodland remains in the area at Coed-y-celyn. The main development of the area went hand in hand with improvements in road transport, which accelerated during the first half of the nineteenth century. The area, in particular the Fairy Glen, or Ffos Noddyn, became a popular tourist attraction during the latter part of the nineteenth century and is mentioned in most guide books to the region published since the 1880s. The house and estate of Coed-y-celyn is thought to have existed by the 1820s, and is shown on the Ordnance survey map of 1838. The buildings appear to have undergone extensive remodelling in the Italianate style between c. 1850 and 1874, reflecting the increasing prosperity of the time.

4.2.3 Roads

The development of lines of communication forms the most striking aspect of the area's history. It is likely that an eighteenth century pack-horse trail ran along the east bank of the Afon Conwy, though its exact course is not known. By the end of the eighteenth century, prior to 1797, a route had been established between Llanrwst and Penmachno, running along the western side of the Afon Conwy, and for a while, south of Pont yr Afanc, corresponding with the present A470(T). In 1802 the Capel Curig Turnpike Trust was set up to oversee the establishment of a route from Bangor, via Betws-y-coed, to Pentrefoelas and the east. Pont yr Afanc was constructed at this time to carry the road into Bettws, along the minor road south of the Conwy. The Capel Curig Turnpike Trust was superseded in 1819 and the construction of Telford's A5 moved the main thoroughfare further to the east. The route of the A470(T) north of Pont yr Afanc is known to have been in existence at least from 1819, when it appears on a map of the period, and was probably built at the same time as Telford's road. In 1864 the Porthmadoc and Beaverpool Turnpike Trust was founded to construct and maintain the roads of the area; that part of the present A470(T) south of Pont yr Afanc fell under the jurisdiction of the trust. The trust was eventually discontinued in 1886.

4.3 Gazetteer of Archaeological Sites

4.3.1 Sites which are likely to be affected by the proposed road improvements.

1. Mile stone, Beaver Pool Turnpike Road SH79755440

Category C Impact: Likely

A slate mile stone with angled upper corners. The stone, erected by the Turnpike Trust of 1864, is inscribed "FESTINIOG 13 / DOLWYDDELAN 4 1/2 / BETWSYCOED 1 1/2 / LLANRWST 5", and lies just east of the old tollgate house.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: If it is necessary to disturb the stone, it should be re-sited at a relevant location once the improvements have been completed.

2. Pont yr Afanc Bridge SH79825466

Category A Impact: Slight

A good example of an early 19th century single span bridge, with semi-circular arch and rusticated details. The bridge carried the mail road between Betws-y-coed and Corwen over the Afon Conwy. The route of the mail road and the position of the bridge are indicated on Thomas Telford's map of 1811. Mention is also made of the bridge in c. 1810, when Richard Fenton described the bridge as the "new bridge"; it is likely that the bridge dates from c. 1802, and the creation of the Capel Curig Turnpike Trust. The bridge is listed Grade II.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Any work to the bridge including tying in new boundary walls with the existing bridge abutment walls will require Listed Building Consent. Detailed recording for any part of the bridge which may be affected by the proposed works.

3. Fairy Glen Hotel SH79885467

Category C Impact: None

A late 19th century three storey house of stone under a pitched slate roof with dormer windows and rendered gable stacks. The building is double fronted with two projecting bay-windows on the ground floor. The building is named as Fairy Glen house on the 1913 Ordnance Survey map, indicating that it was initially a private house, and only later became a hotel. The Hotel is fronted by low iron railings and flanked by two mature trees: a chilean monkey puzzle and a large pine.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Significant disturbance to the grounds or building should be preceded by a photographic and descriptive survey.

4. House S of Beaver cottages SH79905476

Category C Impact: None

A 19th century stone-built, two storey building with projecting corbelled second storey chimney stack, hipped slate roof and projecting wings on its north side. The building has recently undergone refurbishment and restoration.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Photographic and descriptive recording for any features which would be affected by the proposed scheme.

5. Beaver cottages SH79895480

Category C Impact: None

A row of two, possibly three 19th century cottages. Built of stone rubble under pitched slate roofs, with gable stacks.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Photographic and descriptive recording for any features which would be affected by the proposed scheme.

6. Coed-y-celyn house and garden SH79835502

Category A (Listed Grade II) Impact: Slight on garden boundary wall and garden

A large stone-built Italianate villa. It has a belvedere tower over the entrance, with foliated ornament above the doorway of probable mid-Victorian (1850-60) date (Hubbard, 1986). A service wing to the left, of simpler style, is dated 1874, and is similar in style to a stair wing at the back. Map evidence would suggest a house on the site by 1838 (1st edition OS 1"), which shows two separate buildings, with the drive and enclosing wall as they remain today. The gardens associated with Coed-y-celyn house were large and elaborate. Terraces and glass houses remain, and these with other features such as the enclosing walls, sweeping drive, shelter belts and other ornamental tree plantings are depicted on Ordnance Survey maps of 1875, 1890 and 1900. A large number of outbuildings, including glasshouses, shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1890 were removed by the time of the publication of the 1900 edition.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Present plans suggest part of the garden and garden wall would be affected by the proposed scheme. The garden, although not specifically listed, is an integral part of the site, and detailed recording should be carried out prior to the commencement of construction work. It is also recommended that Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments is consulted before work starts.

7. Lodge, gates and railings at main driveway entrance to Coed-y-celyn House.
SH79865514 and SH79875514

Category A Listed Grade II Impact: None

The lodge is a late 19th century Italianate single storey building with a two-storey cross gable and single large stack at the roof junction. Details include bathstone dressings and slate roofs with projecting rafters and carved apex panels. The building is not shown on a map of 1856, but appears on a map of 1899. The gates and railings are contemporary with the lodge, ie. of the late 19th century.

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Preservation in situ. Listed Building Consent would be required for any alterations to the gate or railings. Advice from Cadw and possibly Listed Building Consent would also be required before disturbance of any feature integral to the house and gardens of Coed-y-celyn, even if that feature is not specifically mentioned within the listed building description.

8. Coed-y-celyn wood (western part) SH79955522C

Category D Impact: Likely

The western part of Coed-y-celyn wood, separated from the main body of the wood by the construction of Telford's A5 circa 1819. The wood is shown on the First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1838, which is one of the main criteria used in determining remnant Ancient Woodland, however the trees mainly appear to be the result of regeneration, with more mature trees lining the western side of the A470(T).

Recommendation for further assessment: None.

Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.

5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK AND MITIGATORY MEASURES

5.1 Further Assessment Work

This section summarises the work which is recommended to evaluate those archaeological remains whose status and extent are not yet established, i.e. sites in Category E. They will be reclassified and suitable mitigatory measures suggested following evaluation.

Category E - Sites needing further investigation

None.

5.2 Mitigatory Measures

This section lists the remaining sites according to category. The categorisation attempts to quantify the importance of the archaeological resource, as suggested in the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2.

Category A - National importance

- | | | |
|--|----------------|--------------------|
| 2. Pont yr Afanc Bridge | Impact: Slight | Detailed recording |
| 6. Coed-y-celyn House and garden | Impact: Slight | Detailed recording |
| 7. Lodge, gates and railings at main driveway entrance to Coed-y-celyn House | Impact: None | |

Category B - Regional importance

None

Category C - Local importance

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. Fairy Glen Hotel | Impact: None |
| 4. House S of Beaver cottages | Impact: None |
| 5. Beaver cottages | Impact: None |

Category D - Minor and damaged sites

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mile stone | Impact: Likely | Relocation of stone |
| 8. Coed-y-celyn wood (western part) | Impact: Likely | |

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 Unpublished Sources

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Plans at 1:500 provided by the Welsh Office

6.2 Published Sources

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Figures

Map 1 Location of sites

Map 2 First edition Ordnance Survey 1" to the mile (1838)

Map 3 25" County series (1900 edition)

Map 4 25" County series (1900 edition)

Map 5 25" County series (1900 edition)

Project name A470(T)
Pont yr Afanc - Betws y Coed
Road Improvement

Project No. G.1374

Scale 1:5000 Date 22:04:96

Title
Archaeological Assessment:
Location of Sites

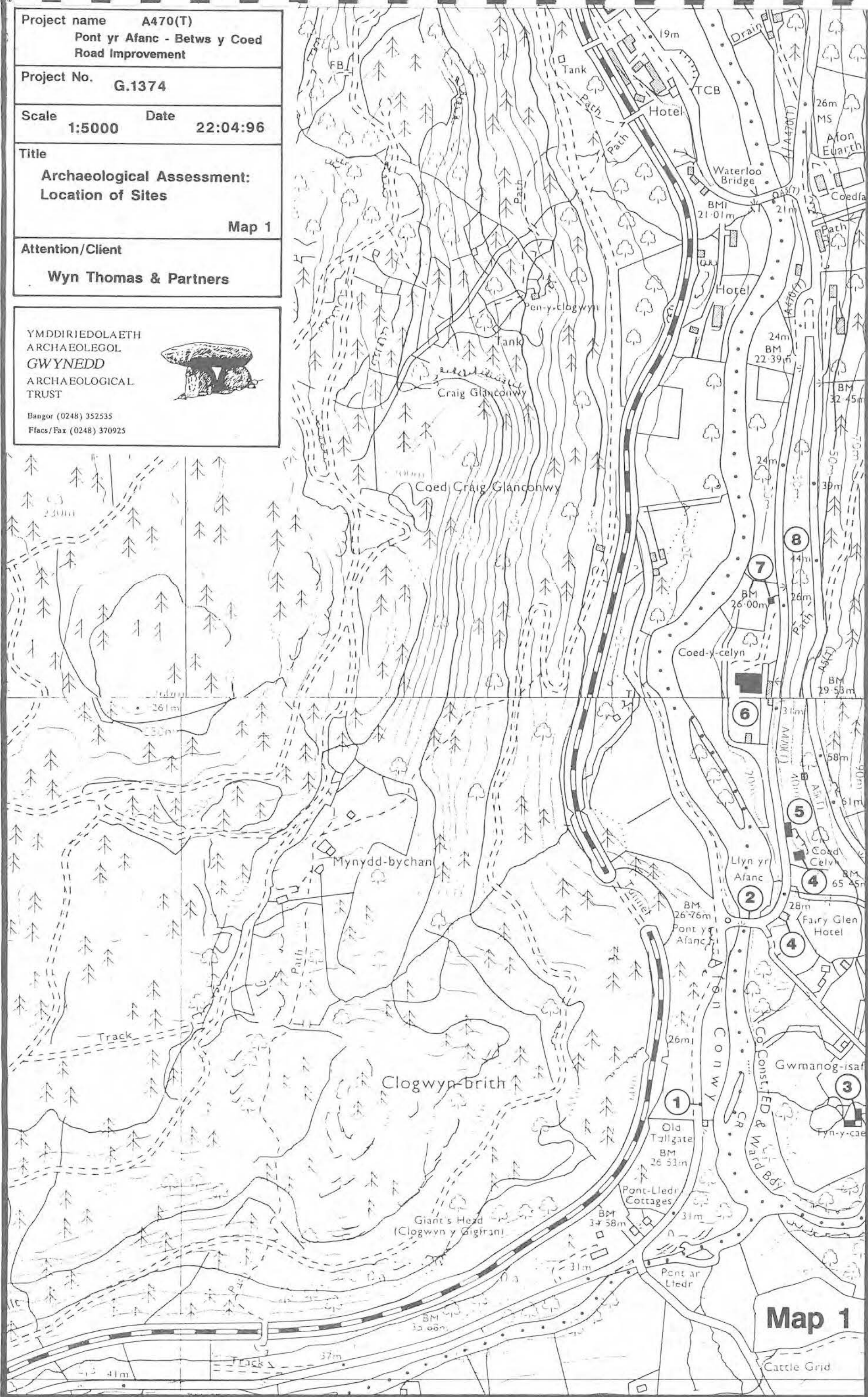
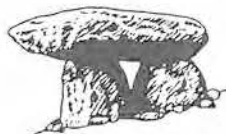
Map 1

Attention/Client

Wyn Thomas & Partners

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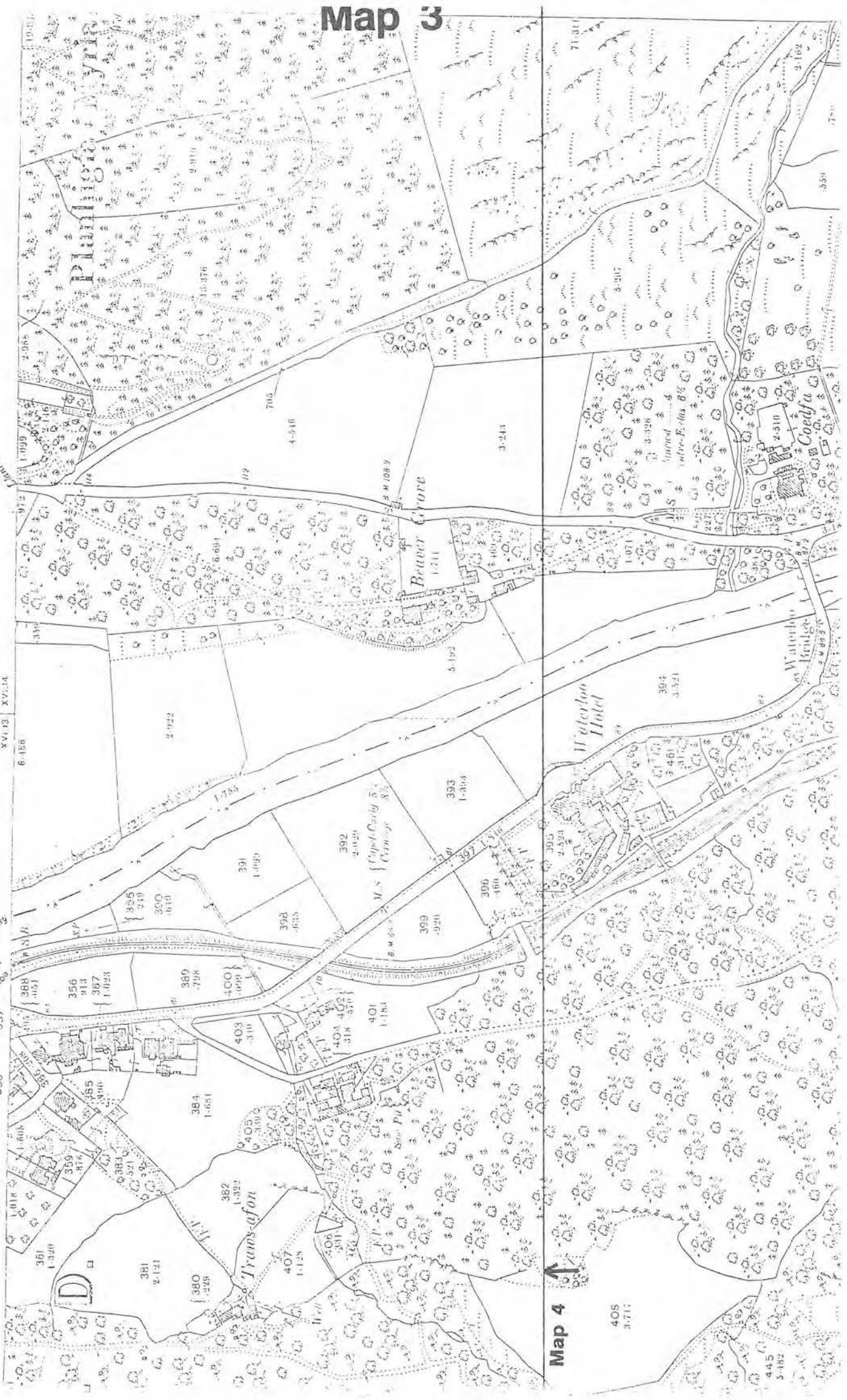
Map 1

Cattle Grid

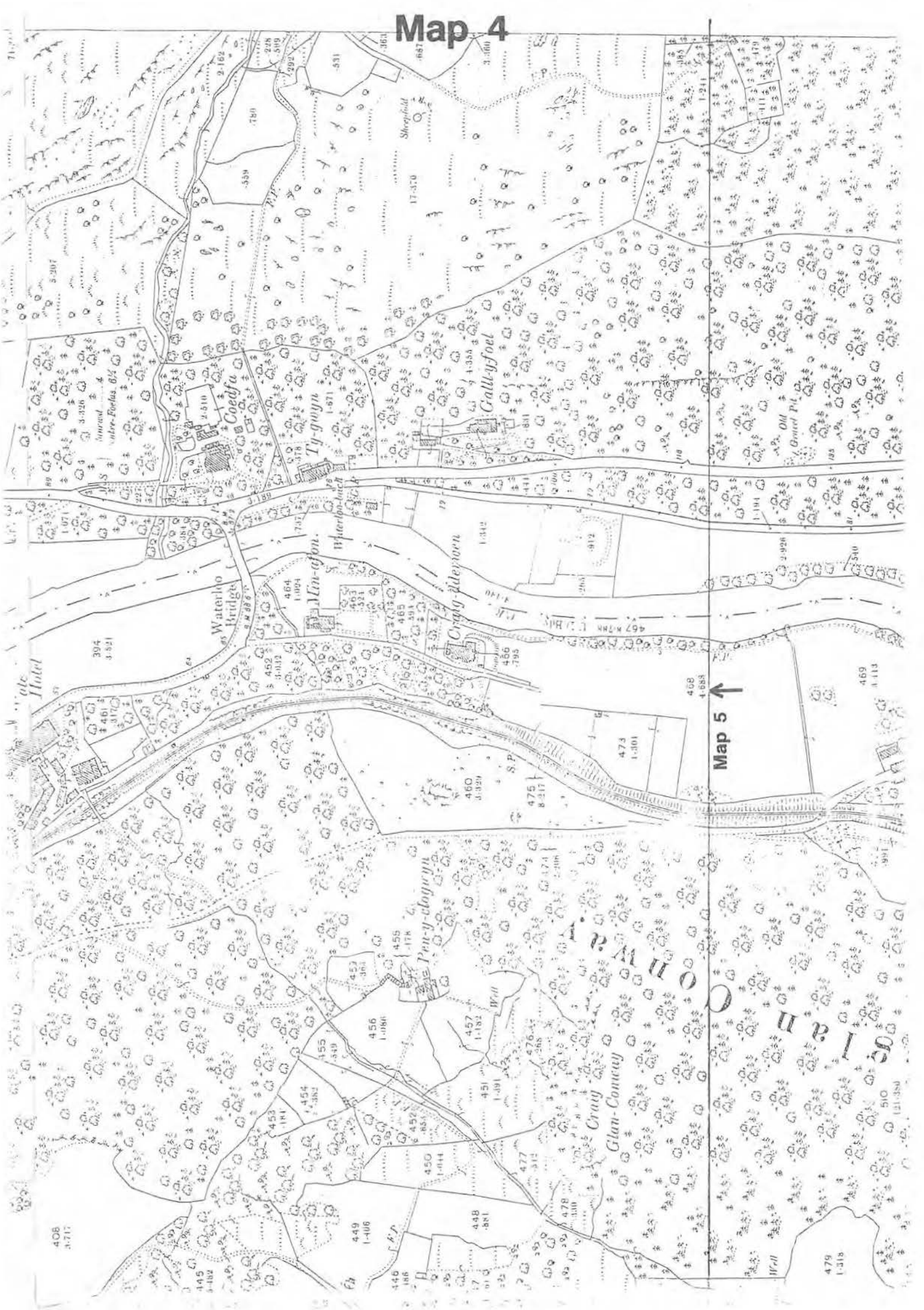


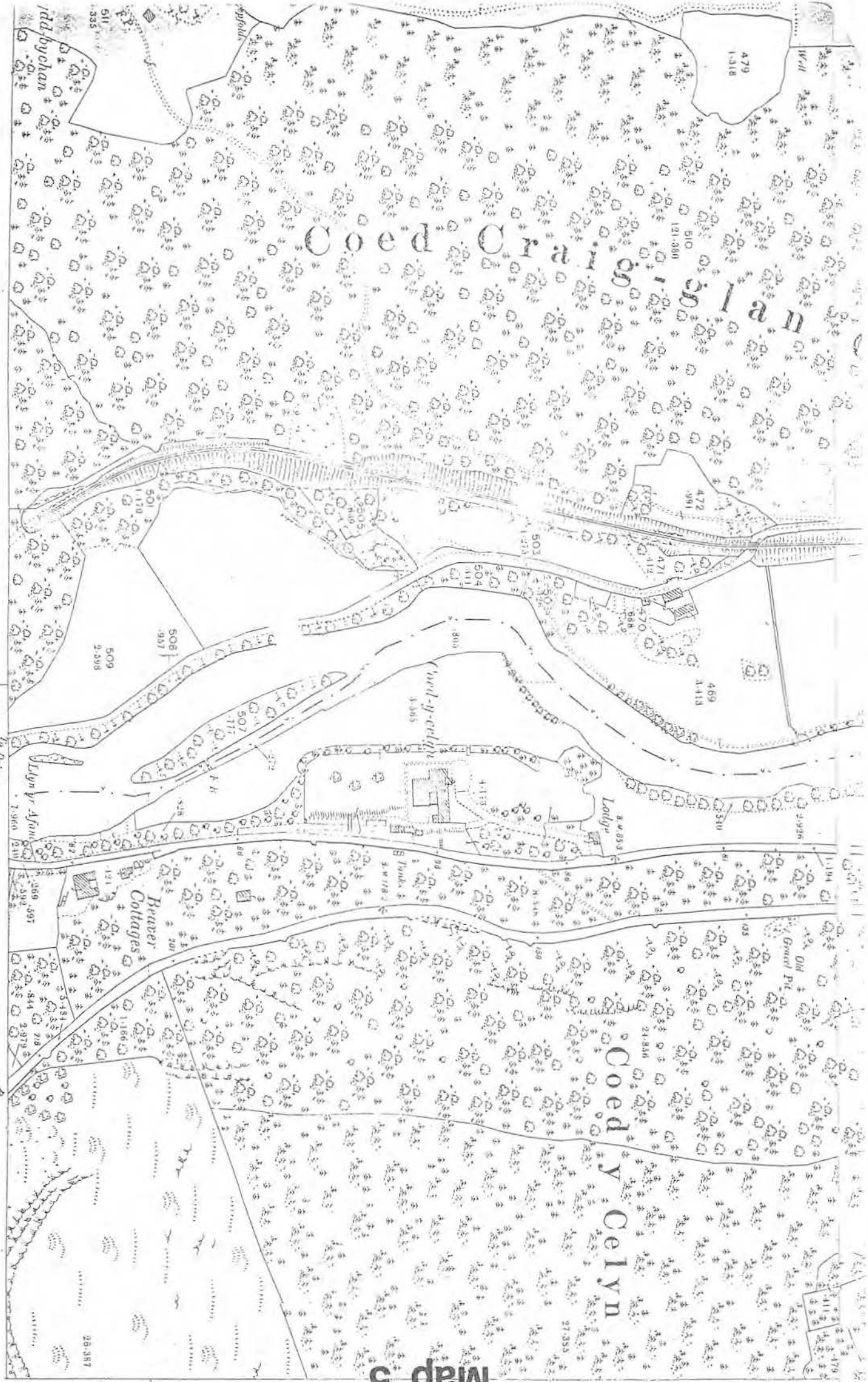
Map 2

DENB.
XVI.13 XVI.14
6-186
 L.L. & N.W.A.
RAILROAD JUNCTION
RIVER CONTING
 357
 Bettis-y-coed
358



Map 4





DEBIA
Llanfrynion
VALE OF CONWAY

Scale 25m being 25.311 inches on a Statute Mile or 208.33 Feet to One Inch

PRICE 3/-

Link to: 0
Foot 100 0

40 Chains
1000 Yards
2500 Feet

on Level of the Sea
ice level.

