

LLANLLECHID STW - RISING MAIN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING
AND MONITORING (G1363)

REPORT NO. 212

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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AND MONITORING (G1363)

prepared for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AND MONITORING OF SITES FOR THE LLANLLECHID STW - RISING MAIN (G1363)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have constructed a new sewer pipeline in the fields north and west of the Llanllechid sewage treatment works. The pipeline runs from Llwyn Bleddyn road at SH61656782 to just south of Llanllechid church SH62136861, a distance of c. 1km. The construction of the pipeline affected a corridor approximately 15m wide. An initial archaeological assessment of the line of the proposed route was carried out by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) in September 1995 (GAT Report No. 177). That report contained recommendations for the recording of specific features before construction started, and for a watching brief during construction.

1.2 Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) submitted a project design and costing for carrying out the recommended works. These were accepted and the Contracts Section were engaged to carry out the work.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The initial archaeological assessment identified four sites of interest:

1. An area of early field remains, thought to be the remnants of a Prehistoric or Roman settlement;
2. A rectangular structure or long hut dating from at least the 17th century, and possibly Medieval in origin;
3. A raised path or denuded field boundary; and
4. The track to Talyarn which appeared from cartographic evidence to be of Medieval date.

2.2 Two principal recommendations were made in the initial report: (i) that sites 1, 2 and 3 were surveyed and fully recorded by photograph and written description before construction started; and (ii) that a watching brief be carried out during construction, and a full description made of any archaeological sites encountered.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Stage 1

A photographic record was made of sites 1,2 and 3 using 35mm format in black and white negative and colour transparency film. A written record of the above sites was made, using standard GAT monument record forms. A detailed survey using an EDM theodolite was undertaken at sites 1,2, and 3 and the results processed using a digital ground modelling software package.

3.2 Stage 2

A watching brief was undertaken during the stripping of the topsoil. This involved walking the length of the pipeline following the removal of the topsoil, and examining any areas of potential interest. Unfortunately, due to a misunderstanding between the pipeline contractor and the archaeologist, the section across the track to Talyarn was not recorded.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Results of survey

Site 1 Area of early field remains SH620618C

This site consists of lines of boulders, assumed to be the remains of wall foundations, located alongside a small stream. The walls are confined to an area of low-lying land some 190m by 40m forming the south-west side of the stream terrace. The area is bounded to the south-west by a moderately steep but low hill, the base of which has been revetted and enclosed by a length of meandering dry-stone boulder walling of one, though occasionally two courses in height (c. 0.18 - 0.6m in height). The exact form of the revetment wall has been obscured by collapse and dumping, however it ranges from between 2.0m - 3.0m in width.

A series of low dry-stone walls extend from the revetment wall to the north-east into the low-lying area towards the stream. The walls are mostly visible as single lines of boulders, although some have evidence of inner and outer facing and there is at least one stretch of walling formed by boulders set upright. The walls are fragmentary, but they remain up to 2m in width and 0.5m in height.

Although difficult to understand, the walls appear to have originally extended across the stream, and the extant boundary north-east of the stream which is in part of orthostatic construction may have originally been linked to them. They appear to have formed a series of small enclosures, and occasional platforms suggest the sites of buildings.

It is very difficult to date the remains: the estate maps of the 18th and 19th centuries (see GAT Report No. 177) indicate very rapid changes during those centuries. The 1768 map suggests the area was part moor land, whereas the 1855 map shows the farm of Cefn Bedw south-west of the site, but this, along with its associated fields had completely disappeared by 1917, by which time the fields had been completely re-designed and laid out as rectangular enclosures. The revetment wall at the base of the slope is shown on the 1855 map, but the fragmentary walling alongside the stream is not indicated. Neither are shown on the 1768 map. The majority of the walling occupying the low lying area adjacent to the stream are not marked on any of the maps. Typological comparisons would suggest the walls may once have formed part of a late Prehistoric or Roman settlement, but this would need to be confirmed by excavation.

Site 2 Rectangular structure SH62016819

This structure lies on low-lying ground, on a gentle south-east facing slope near a stream and is situated among what appears to be the remains of small roughly rectangular enclosures, probably of contemporary date.

The structure measures approximately 16m by 8m externally, with walls 1m - 1.2m wide and up to 0.5m high. It is well built with orthostats facing the interior and exterior of the walls. The external corners are slightly rounded, and a slight boulder plinth is visible along the base of the south-west side. An entrance 1.90m wide lies in the centre of the north-east end. Another possible entrance (1.2m in width) lies in the north-west wall towards its north-east extent. The south-west angle of the structure appears to have been damaged, and is now partly breached.

The interior of the structure consists a single rectangular compartment measuring 13.5m by 5.2m, and orientated NW-SE. There are hints of internal features at the south-west end.

This structure is most likely a dwelling house, of Medieval or immediately Post-medieval date (that is, occupied sometime between the 13th century and the 17th century). It is not marked on any of the available early maps, and the field name on the 1768 map is *Rhosydd* (i.e. moor land).

The initial assessment described the area to the north of the structure as containing a jumble of uncleared boulders, probably dumped during the glacial period, with occasional clearances and lengths of walling. Upon further investigation the clearances and lengths of walling appeared to correspond to a series of sub-rectangular enclosures, two of which appear to be associated with the rectangular structure. The boundaries, originally stone banks with boulder orthostats are extremely ephemeral and remain to a height of less than 0.5m and are between 1.2 and 5.4m in width. Their present condition reflects the severity of robbing and collapse which has occurred, and renders it difficult to obtain their original dimensions. A number of these relict boundaries can be traced on early maps, notably an estate map of 1768, the Tithe map of 1840 and a post 1840 estate map. Figure 2 shows the remains as surveyed, which can be compared to the boundaries on the two estate maps.

Site 3 Raised path (remains of bank/wall) SH62096825

This feature runs southeast - northwest and cuts across from an existing corner of a field boundary towards the stream to the north. Originally considered as the remains of a possible raised trackway, these remains are now thought to represent the remains of a disused field boundary forming part of the field system associated with site 2. The field wall is shown on an estate map of 1768 and the Tithe 1840 and is likely to have become redundant during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The wall foundations are visible south of a small stream and below and parallel to the remains of another, and probably later, ruined field boundary. The remains take the form of a raised and undulating stone platform 2.5 m wide, 0.2m high and between 4-5m long. Along the external edges of the feature are the remains of glacial boulder facing; this remains largely intact towards its southern end, but has been disturbed towards the stream to the north.

4.2 Results of watching brief

No additional information was obtained from the watching brief. The topsoil was very thin, and lay directly on solid rock or huge boulders. Site 1 was crossed where there were no surviving walls, and no features were visible in the section. A platform close to site 2 appeared to be defined by a break in slope caused by the underlying geology, rather than a man-made boundary, but this does not affect the validity of the other enclosures noted on the survey. Site 3 was not affected by the construction of the pipeline. The section through site 4, as mentioned earlier, was not recorded. No other features were noted during the watching brief.

5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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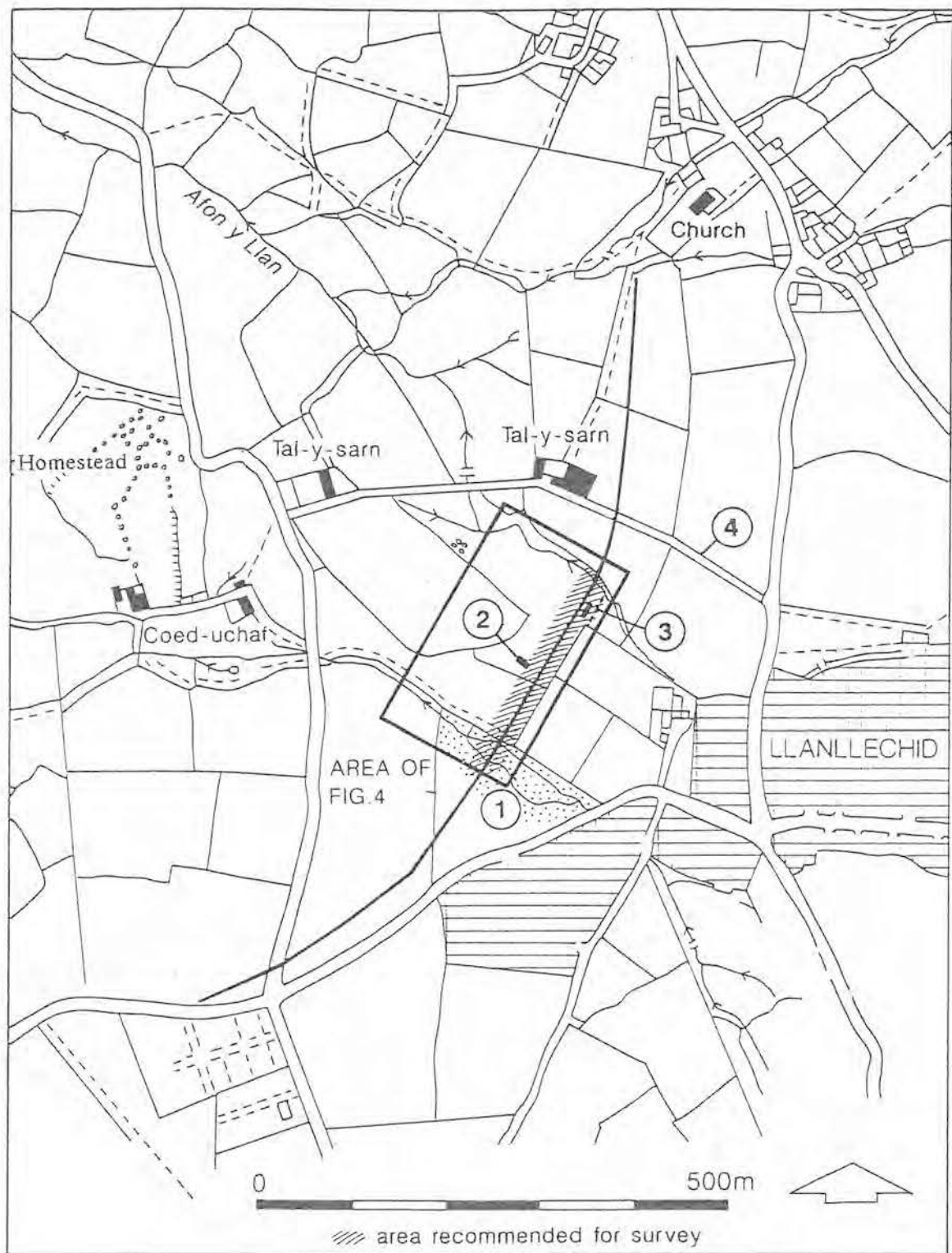


Fig. 1 Location map

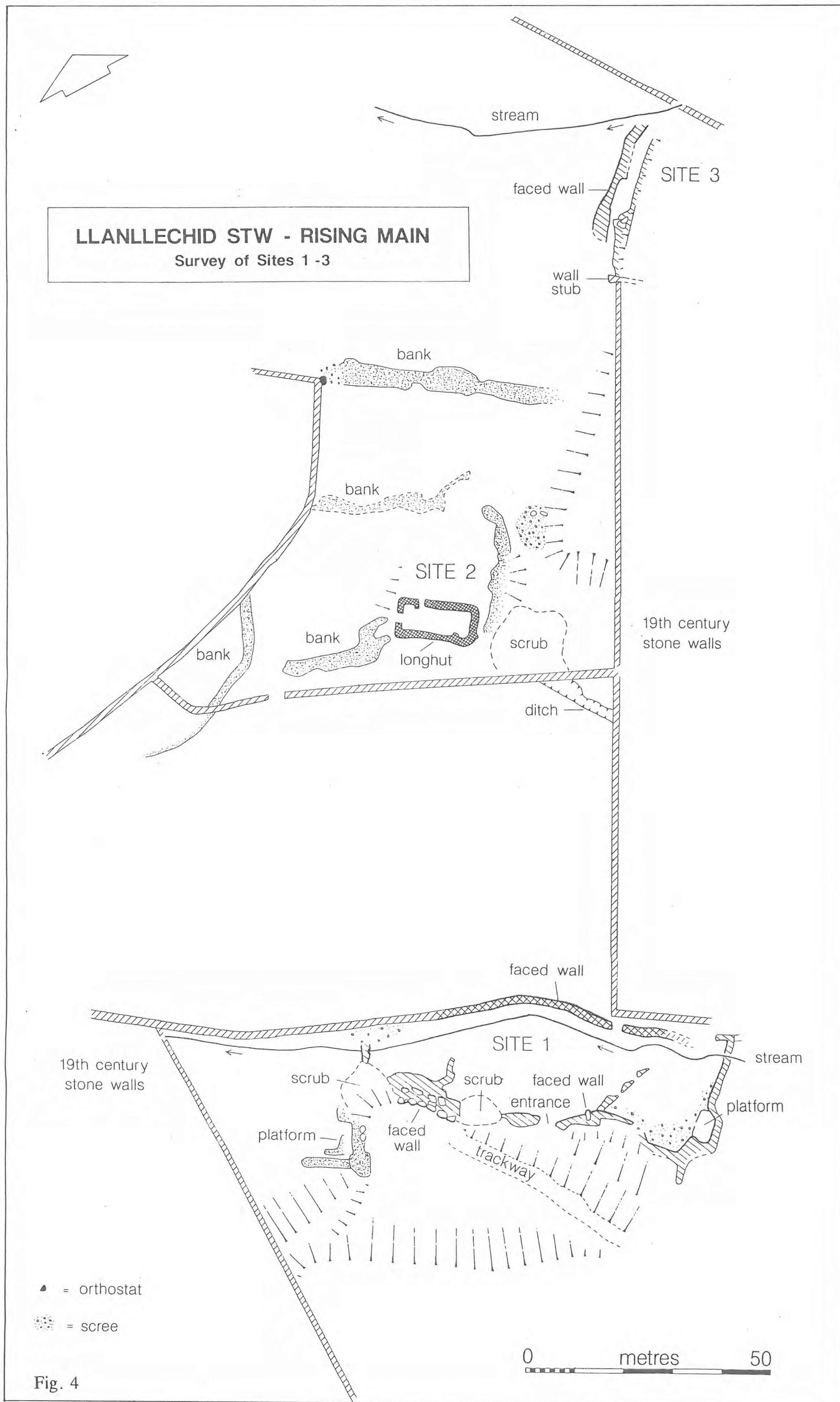


Fig. 4



View of long hut (site 2) from west



Site 1: looking north-east

