

MENAI BRIDGE TO TREBORTH  
SEWER RISING MAIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
AND WATCHING BRIEF

Report No. 217

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

# MENAI BRIDGE TO TREBORTH SEWER RISING MAIN

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATCHING BRIEF (G1373)

prepared for Dŵr Cymru - Welsh Water

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# **MENAI BRIDGE TO TREBORTH SEWER RISING MAIN**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND WATCHING BRIEF (G1373)**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have constructed a rising main between the Gasholder Station on the shore of the Menai Straits at Menai Bridge and the Treborth Sewage Treatment Works. The pipeline occupied a corridor approximately 15m wide over a distance of just under three kilometres. An initial archaeological assessment of the line of the proposed route was carried out by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts Section) in January 1995 (GAT Report No. 170). 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 costings 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 five sites of potential sites of interest:

1. A possible platform, apparently revetted along side an adjacent drainage channel;
2. An area of cultivation terraces, thought to be associated with the Prehistoric or Romano-British settlement, which is known to lie further to the north;
- 2a. A circular feature, located using aerial photographs;
3. A field system, initially identified from aerial photographs and thought to be associated with the early settlement, as in 2. above;
4. A possible hut scoop, thought to be an outlying hut associated with the nearby settlement of Prehistoric or Romano-British date;
5. A trackway, which cartographic evidence suggests predates the construction of Telford's A5.

**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 detailed survey using an EDM theodolite was undertaken of the area encompassing sites 1 to 5 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 for the area between the east side of Coed Mor woods and the west side of the garden of Cartrefle. This involved walking the length of the pipeline following the removal of the topsoil, and examining any areas of potential interest. The watching brief was undertaken on 24/05/96.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Results of survey**

#### **Site 1 Possible platform**

Situated in a low lying area, just above HWM, and next to a low rock out crop is a level platform, containing a number of large boulders which appear to form the remains of a stone built enclosure. A drain runs down the west side of the platform. The site, although visibly intriguing, is not clearly defined and proved difficult to survey in detail. Investigation with the point of a ranging rod would suggest the platform is solid rock, and therefore an extension of the adjacent rock outcrop. No firm conclusion concerning the status of this site is possible without excavation, but on present evidence we believe the features to be natural rather than of archaeological origin. The site was not disturbed by the pipeline, and no further information was gained during the watching brief.

**Site 2 Area of cultivation terraces and associated settlement** The features in this area which were to be directly affected by the pipeline were banks and drainage ditches: the intriguing platform scoops to the north were not affected. The circular feature 2a, identified from aerial photographs, was not visible on the ground, and its mapped location suggested it would lie just outside the construction corridor. The severe cattle trampling in the area increased the difficulties of recognising the more ephemeral features.

Area 2 is dominated by the stream which runs under the A5 and straight down the field to the straits. The stream formerly ran west of its present course, and the old stream bed can be clearly seen diverging from the present course 60m south of the A5. It is interesting that the old stream bed still forms the district boundary. At the point where the old stream bed diverges from the present course, there is a rectangular platform on the east side of the stream, aligned east-west, and measuring 12m by 7m. The platform is thought to be the site of a former building, although there is no cartographic evidence for it. There are two other scoops higher up the slope, but there is insufficient evidence to determine if they are natural or archaeological features.

#### **Site 3 Field system and associated features SH54487172C**

This area is divided by a number of low ploughed-out banks, all less than 10cm in height and up to 2m across, and all well spread by ploughing. They appear to have formed at least three, possibly more, narrow fields aligned downslope.

At the north-west end of the east bank is an ovoid platform 15m by 32m, set into the gentle slope; there are no obvious structural remains on the platform.

#### **Sites 4 and 5 Scoop and trackway SH54377168**

The field adjoining Coed Mor woods contains a trackway of uncertain date which runs from the entrance into the field off the A5, diagonally down the slope in an eastward direction. The track, now grassed over, appears to run straight to the field bank on the east side, but there is no evidence of a blocked gap where it would have crossed through. The track is not visible on the east side of the field bank, although it would have run along the base of the terraced field boundary and this may have obscured it.

On the north side of the track is a small sub-circular scoop forming a level platform 3m by 4m. The site may be the remains of a single round hut, although this could only be confirmed by excavation.

### **4.2 Results of watching brief**

Two sites were noted during the watching brief. Neither of these was related to the upstanding features previously surveyed. The sites have been numbered in sequence after those noted during the assessment.

#### **Site 6 Charcoal filled pit.**

An elongated pit dug into the natural clay. It measured 1.5m long by 0.75m wide by 0.1m deep at its maximum and was filled with a mixture of charcoal, soil and stone. The pit was dug into the orange/brown sub-soil. No adjacent features were visible, and there were no diagnostic or datable finds.

#### **Site 7 Area of burnt stone.**

An area of burnt stone was noted in the woods alongside the pipeline which had already been dug and backfilled. The burnt stone probably indicates the site of a Prehistoric burnt mound. It is situated in a typical location on slightly sloping ground alongside a small stream. It is not known how much of the site was disturbed by the digging of the pipe trench, but it appeared that a significant part of the site remained undisturbed on the north side of the trench.

### **5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

A measured survey was carried out of visible features in the fields between Coed Mor woods and the garden of Cartrefle. A number of the features identified during the assessment were found to be too ephemeral to plot as definite features. However at the west end of the area a track which may pre-date the A5 was surveyed, and shown that it may be of similar date to the lynchet in the field to its west. It also passes close to the circular scoop which may be a single round hut. Although the lynched field boundary has been used until recent times, the sharp break in slope along its length suggests it could be a part of the Prehistoric field system.

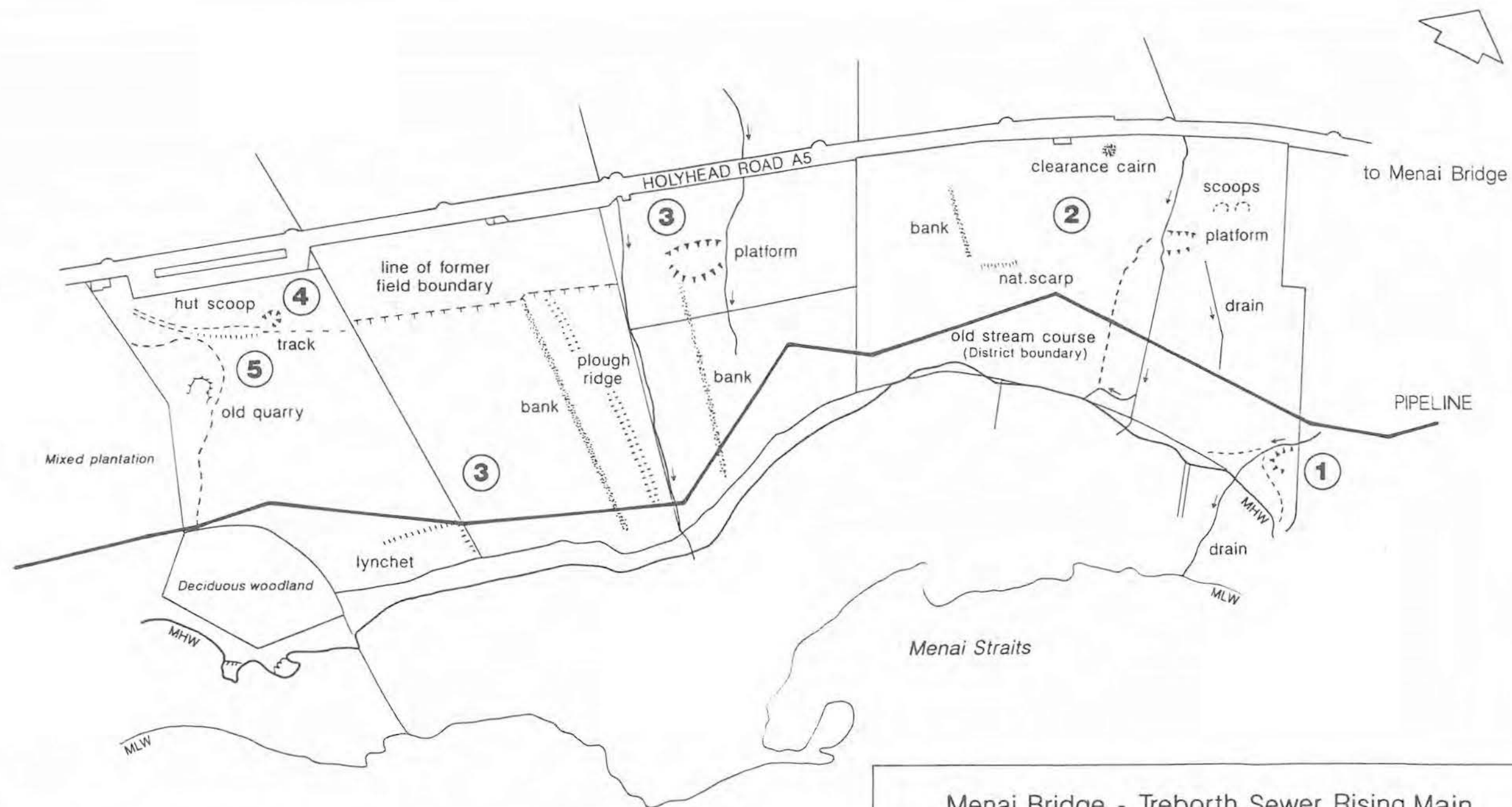
The three banks running north-south suggest that the area was once divided into a series of smaller fields; these banks, from their location and method of construction, are thought to be Post-medieval in date. Another length of bank running in the same direction lies at the west end of site 2.

Also within site 2 is a levelled platform of unknown date. It has certainly been constructed (i.e. it is not a natural feature), and it bears a close resemblance to platform house sites of Medieval and later date, but the exact status of this site could only be determined by excavation, as could the intriguing remains of site 1.

A watching brief was carried out, during which a quantity of burnt stone was noted in the Coed Mor woods (site 7), and a charcoal filled pit was examined (site 6). The burnt stones are most likely to indicate the site of a burnt mound of Prehistoric date (a number of similar sites have recently been dated to between 1,000 and 2,000 BC), the purpose of which is thought to have been for using hot stone to heat water in a rectangular pit. There is insufficient evidence to allocate a date or function to site 6, but the lack of finds suggests it may indicate Prehistoric activity.

### **6.0 SOURCES**

Roberts R, 1995, *Menai Bridge to Treborth Sewer Rising Main* GAT Report No. 170.



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