

MOELFRE TO BENLLECH  
SEWAGE PUMPING MAIN (G1453)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Report No. 241

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

MOELFRE TO BENLLECH  
SEWAGE PUMPING MAIN (G1453)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

prepared for Dwr Cymru

January 1997

**Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 241**

# **MOELFRE TO BENLLECH SEWAGE PUMPING MAIN (G1453)**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A sewage pipeline is proposed between Moelfre and Benllech, a distance of just over 4km. Gwynedd Archaeological Trust produced a project design for an initial archaeological assessment based on a brief supplied by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service, which was accepted by the clients.

### **2.0 ASSESSMENT BRIEF**

An initial report was requested from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, assessing the likely archaeological impact of the scheme and suggesting mitigatory measures.

The assessment was to comprise two stages of work followed by a report:

- a desk-based assessment of documentary and cartographic evidence;
- a rapid field search of the route to locate and briefly record any features, earthworks, structures or locations of potential for early settlement or other activity;
- a report, summarizing the results, and providing an assessment of the archaeological value and potential of the area and appropriate mitigatory recommendations where necessary.

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.

### **3.0 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

#### **3.1 Desk-top Study**

This involved consultation of maps, computer records, written records and reference works, which make up the Sites and Monuments Record at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. Records (including early Ordnance Survey maps, tithe maps, schedules, and reference works - see bibliography) were consulted in the Ynys Mon Archives, Llangefni and the University of Wales, Bangor, Archives.

#### **3.2 Field Search**

This was undertaken on the 22nd January 1997, when the whole of the proposed route of the pipeline was walked apart from that of the Golden Sunset Caravan Park where access was denied. Weather conditions were good for fieldwork.

Very few features were identified in this predominantly agricultural landscape which has been comprehensively cleared and cultivated in the past. All features identified were described, assessed and marked on copies of the 1:2,500 OS map as accurately as possible without surveying.

### 3.3 Report

All available information was collated and 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.

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 following categories were used to define the importance of the archaeological resource.

#### *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 of or during destruction, 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 unless they lie outside the directly affected area.

### 3.5 Definition of Impact

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

#### None:

There is no 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, eg a track or field boundary.

Likely.

In some instances the site in question would not fall within the direct line of the proposed development but could be affected by construction works 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.

Unknown:

This is used when the location of the site is unknown, but thought to be in the vicinity of the proposed development.

### **3.6 Definition of Mitigatory Recommendations**

None:

No impact so no requirement for mitigation measures.

Detailed recording:

Requiring a photographic record, surveying and the production of a measured drawing prior to commencement of works.

Archaeological excavation may also be required depending on the particular feature and the extent and effect of the impact.

Basic recording:

Requiring a photographic record and full description prior to commencement of works.

Watching brief:

Requiring observation of particular identified features or areas during works in their vicinity. This may be supplemented by detailed or basic recording of exposed layers, structures or sections.

Avoidance:

Features need not be affected but their position should be noted and avoided by all works.

Reinstatement:

The feature should be reinstated with archaeological advice and supervision.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Preliminary topographic assessment**

The route as presently proposed falls into four topographic zones:

a. At the northern and southern ends, at Moelfre and Benllech, the route runs along existing roads which although following the line of medieval or post-medieval roads can be expected to be heavily disturbed by modern construction and services.

b. The majority of the route, except where it crosses minor tracks, consists of undulating pasture fields of gentle to medium slope in which the visibility of archaeological features can be expected to be fair, and would show as platforms or terraces although much denuded by cultivation.

c. The southern part of the route from c. 1km north of Benllech, for c. 500m, within the grounds of the Golden Sunset Caravan Park is somewhat different. This was not available for survey but is of fairly level pasture fields which could be regarded as very suitable for early settlement but which 18/19th century clearance and cultivation could have removed without trace. The land seems also to have been somewhat modified and disturbed by works associated with the caravan park.

d. The final half of this stretch was not available for survey as for c but runs on a medium slope through the main part of the caravan park which appears to have been heavily modified by construction of platforms, roads and services and general landscaping.

In terms of potential for archaeological remains of human settlement or other activity, areas a and d have little potential while the better quality land of areas b and c has some potential.

## 4.2 Archaeological and historic background

The area of the survey falls within three parishes, those of Llanallgo, Llaneugrad and Llanfair-mathafarn-eithaf. In the medieval period the first two parishes formed part of the commote of Twrcelyn, in the cantref of Cemais. The third, southern, parish was in the commote of Dindaethwy, Cantref of Rhosyr.

Twrcelyn had townships at Moelfre, Nantfychan and Y Dafarn (Jones Pierce 1951, 3). Nantfychan is the same as the present day farm of Nant Bychan, only c. 250m east of the line of the present survey. The Extent of Anglesey of 1352 listed four carucates of free land at Nantfychan (Carr, 1971-2, 226). A carucate (from the Latin *carucata* – 'ploughland') was an accepted land measure which originated from the amount of land that one ox team could plough in a season, and in Anglesey is thought to have been equivalent to 60 acres (Jones, 1955, 39). Four carucates was a considerable area of ploughland for the period. Jones Pierce (1951, 3) suggests that the land in Twrcelyn was entirely bond (unfree) land up to about 1150 when it was given to freemen by Owain Gwynedd. Dindaethwy however, had a mixture of bond and free settlement in separate distinct areas and the land overlooking Red Wharf Bay and Benllech was free settlement and comprised 23 family groups (ibid, 13). The main implication for the present survey is that there was fairly extensive settlement in this area from at least the medieval period.

Moelfre has its place in history for the Battle of Moelfre of 1157 in which the fleet of Henry II was defeated by the Welsh. The settlement itself however, has little historical note. There were church lands here, belonging to the Bishop of Bangor (Richards, 1972, 42-3) but the settlement probably consisted of just a few fishermen which gained in importance with that of the herring fishery in the 18th century (WM716). It also developed in the 19th century with the exploitation and shipping of the local limestone for building. There are also several impressive lime kilns surviving locally and there was a woollen mill at Moelfre (Richards 1972, 94).

Nant Bychan as a recorded medieval township must have some more extensive remains than the present single farmstead suggests although was probably no more than a hamlet in modern day terms and may have been only a scattered settlement.

Close to the route at Dinas, at the south end of Traeth Bychan was a mill shown by a place name 'Y Felin' marked on the OS 2inch map of 1818-20.

Borth Wen (the cove rather than the farm of that name) is mentioned in a grant of 'a tenement lying near Y Borth Wen' in 1498 (Baron Hill mss Vol 1, 217, no. 1016).

Benllech is largely a modern tourist development and consisted of only a small cluster of houses in 1900 (OS 25") and must have taken its name from a cottage of that name by the beach (OS 25" 1900) which suggests the 'llech' (stone slab) refers to the cliffs rather than the Neolithic burial chamber which lies further up slope. However, a mill is mentioned here in The Extent of Anglesey, 1352 (Carr 1971-2, 240) shared by eight freemen, and 'Melin y Penllech' and 'Y Benllech' are mentioned in documents of 1453 and 1483 (Baron Hill mss Vol. 1, 214, no. 1002 and 216, no. 1010).

At the time of the Tithe Apportionment of c. 1841 the northern part of the survey area, in Llanallgo, was divided into four separate holdings and may hint at the original medieval free tenements. The middle part of the survey area, in Llaneugrad was all Lord Dinorben's land and was part of the Kimmel Estate, accumulated from the profits from the Parys Mountain mine (T. Roberts pers. comm.). The southern part of the area, in Llanfair-mathafarn-eithaf, belonged largely to the Bulkeley Estate and it seems must have been so for a long period since there are leases and grants etc of the 15th century in the Baron Hill mss (quoted above). There were, however, a few separate tenements in the north of this area.

The field pattern of the area, dominated by large, straight-edged rectilinear fields is one which can be expected to



result from 18th/19th century re-organisation, intake and improvement. However some of the properties show elements of an earlier, less regular pattern, particularly observable on the tithe map of c. 1841, with some possible remnants of medieval arable fields, ploughed in long, S-shaped strips. The nature of all the surviving field boundaries is therefore of relevance since they may vary in construction according to their date of origin.

#### 4.3 The existing archaeological record

The earliest occupation of the area is represented by Neolithic burial chambers at Din Lligwy (PRN 3594), Pant y saer (Tynyngogl) (PRN 3601) and Benllech (PRN 3610) showing that this area of good soils was settled by Britain's first agriculturalists at least as early as the third millennium BC.

Later settlement, in the first millennium BC and AD, is represented by well preserved and substantially built settlements at Din Lligwy (PRN 2132), Llanallgo (PRN 3595), Marianglas (PRN 3611), Tynyngogl (PRN 3609) and Pant-y-saer (PRN 60). Another settlement, of which unfortunately little now remains, lies on the hill top at Dinas (PRN 3600), south of Traeth Bychan, close to the present survey route. These settlements were occupied in the Romano-British period and perhaps earlier and show that the area was well settled and probably extensively cultivated at this date although evidence of the contemporary field systems has been erased by more recent cultivation and land improvements. The finds from the excavated site of Din Lligwy and stray finds from across the area generally, and of some quality, including a decorated stone quern, a Roman coin and bronze brooches show that settlement was probably relatively prosperous.

From the early medieval period is a probable Viking burial found at Benllech (PRN 3606) and just south of Benllech an unusual and important Viking settlement has been located, possibly representing a trading post.

Little fieldwork has yet been carried out on the medieval period in this area and the precise nature of settlement and field systems is still to be identified. The documentary evidence, described above, shows that the area continued to be well settled. The physical evidence has suffered from the major changes brought about by agricultural improvements in the 18th and 19th centuries but nevertheless much may eventually be learned. There are many irregular and curving elements in the present field boundary pattern which suggest that they broadly continue that of earlier systems, rather than being an entirely new, regular system. There are a number of strongly curving or narrow fields which suggest the amalgamation of medieval strip fields eg immediately east and west of Ty-mawr. Some 'wandering' boundaries can be identified which seem to represent early relict elements carried through into the present day pattern. The transect of the landscape required for the pipeline construction can expect to at least locate elements of earlier boundaries and of associated trackways.

#### 4.4 The archaeological survey

Features are numbered starting from the northern end of the route. The locations of the features are marked on the accompanying map (fig. 1).

##### 1. Old field boundaries SH51208606

*Category D Impact: Likely*

Very slight linear earthworks c. 0.3m high representing cleared and ploughed over old field boundaries as marked on OS 25" map of 1925. Part of a rectilinear field system which probably represents 18th or 19th century intake of marginal land. Crossed by the line of the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

##### 2. Hollows SH51238608

*Category D Impact: None*

A line of shallow hollows lying approximately parallel to the cliff edge within a triangular area of rougher pasture which was not originally part of the field as marked on the OS 25" map of 1925. There are probably four hollows now well ploughed over and amorphous. The best preserved, at the south end, is approximately rectangular, c. 6m by 2m in plan and c. 0.4m deep. These seem likely to be World War II home guard slit trenches. They lie c. 20m east of the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

**3. Old field boundary SH51258596**

*Category D Impact: Likely*

A very slight linear earthwork marking the line of a former field boundary lining up with a break in the cliff edge. This is an old field boundary as marked on the OS 25" map of 1925. See no. 1. Crossed by the line of the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Basic recording.*

**4. Hollow/platform SH51098569**

*Category E Impact: None*

A large amorphous hollow terraced into the bottom of the field slope and c. 20m diam., terraced into the slope about 1.5m. Interpretation uncertain. Unlikely to be a quarry since there are easily available outcrops of stone nearby. It lies next to a major 'wandering' field boundary (no. 5) which gives it some credence as a medieval or earlier house platform which has been almost erased by post medieval cultivation. Lying c. 25 north-west of the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

**5. Field boundary SH51128568**

*Category C Impact: Likely*

An existing bank, ditch and hedge boundary which has a 'wandering' line suggesting that it is a continuation of an early boundary of medieval or earlier date. Crossed by the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Detailed recording.*

**6. Field boundary SH51048556**

*Category C Impact: Likely.*

As for 5.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Detailed recording.*

**7. Hollow/platform SH51158532**

*Category E Impact: None/substantial.*

A slight amorphous hollow terraced into the gentle slope, c. 15m diam., terraced in c. 0.6m. Function or origin unclear. Its proximity to the pond (no. 8) must mean they are associated. Such ponds often lie next to cottages and result from the quarrying of stone for construction so the hollow may represent a platform for a building of some kind which has since been cleared and ploughed over. The OS 1" 1st edition, c. 1840 shows what seems to be a small enclosure with a building approximately at this location but this cannot be certain because of the small scale of the map. The impact depends on the final line of the easement. As presently shown the hollow will lie about 5m west of the easement but if the route is moved west to avoid the caravan park at Gell Bach then it could cut through the hollow. A minor deviation of the route would be preferable and the layout needs checking on the ground.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Re-route easement, avoid accidental damage and carry out watching brief.*

**8. Pond SH51138531**

*Category D Impact: None.*

A sub-rectangular pond. Artificially cut into the slope of the hill and the bedrock by c. 2m and more as the depth was not ascertainable. The water seems good and there must be a spring feeding it. See no 7 for interpretation. It lies about 20m from the easement.



*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*  
*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

#### **9. Building and enclosure SH51138522**

*Category B Impact: None.*

A ruinous building, a probable house. Medieval or sub-medieval. Rectangular, c. 10.5m by 6.5m overall, c. 8.5m by 4.5m internally. Very substantial walls c. 1m wide of large limestone blocks and slabs both laid and orthostatic. The entrance appears to have been in the centre of the south side. The walls are partly masked by tumble but must survive up to 1.2m max. No evidence of a chimney. The modern enclosure in which the building stands is sub-rectangular and has various terraces and slight traces of walls suggesting that this was once a farmyard complex now largely obscured by trampling and dumping of rubble. According to the farmer, and confirmed by the tithe apportionment this small area was formerly part of Gell-fawr ('Gell helyg' in the tithe schedule) not Gell-bach. Perhaps this building with its and yard was Gell-helyg? It lies next to a spring with an area of wet land and helyg is from *helygyn* - 'willow' which would fit the location. The present Gell-fawr lies on higher land to the north. Certainly its size and neat construction are more indicative of a domestic structure than an agricultural one and the quality of construction is in clear contrast to that of the ruinous old Gell-bach farmhouse further to the south which is of quite poor material despite the presence close by of good quality stone which, however, at the time of its construction, must have been within Gell-helyg land. The line of the easement is not finalised here. If it goes through the enclosure then the building will be c. 20m from the easement. The yard itself is not of much value but a full watching brief of this section might provide dating evidence for the period of use of the building.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*  
*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Avoid buildings. Watching brief.*

#### **10. Old Gell-bach farmhouse SH51168514**

*Category C Impact: None*

As shown on the OS 25" map of 1900. Now unroofed and ruinous. Appears to be built of small rubble in contrast to the large slabs of no. 9. What is visible suggests this is post-medieval and the windows are 19th century. However, it does have several phases of additions and it is not easy to identify which part was the earliest and the structure is now in too dangerous a state to enter. Its original date must remain uncertain. It lies some 10m from the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*  
*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

#### **11. Old field boundary SH51608416**

*Category D Impact: Likely*

Very slight linear irregularity in the field surface marks the line of a removed and ploughed over former field boundary, as marked on the OS 25" map of 1900. Cut by the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*  
*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Basic recording.*

#### **12. Trackway/road? SH51668401**

*Category C Impact: Likely*

Approximately straight linear raised ridge c. 10m wide and 0.6m high oriented WNW-ESE, parallel to the field boundary. Unlikely to be natural. It lines up with an old footpath running westwards from Borth-wen (called Ty-croes on the OS map of 1900). It may be an old track or even a road although its line fades out to the west. It is odd that it is a raised ridge rather than a hollow way. Cut by the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*  
*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Watching brief with basic recording.*

#### **13. Well house SH51638369**

*Category C Impact: None*

Spring with limestone slab-built well-house, c. 1m by 1m and 0.7m high with lintel covering slabs.

Post-medieval. Lies c. 20m from the easement.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: None.*

#### **14. Track SH51798357**

*Category D Impact: Slight*

A slight linear irregularity in the field surface close to and parallel to the hedge line. This could be a ploughing feature or could be a trace of a former trackway, now removed and ploughed over, joining with that evident at the south end of the field. However, there is no evidence of such a track on the OS 25" map of 1925.

*Recommendation for further assessment: None.*

*Recommendation for mitigatory measures: Watching brief.*

### **5.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATORY MEASURES**

This lists the sites according to their perceived value as suggested in the 'Design manual for Roads and Bridges', Vol. II, Section 3, Part 2.

#### **Category A - National importance**

Nil.

#### **Category B - Regional importance**

9. Building and enclosure. Avoid accidental damage and carry out watching brief.

#### **Category C - Local importance**

5. Field boundary. Watching brief with detailed recording.

6. Field boundary. As for no. 5.

10. Old Gell-bach farmhouse. No action required.

12. Trackway/road? Watching brief with basic recording.

13. Well house. Avoid accidental damage.

#### **Category D - Minor or damaged sites**

No action required.

1. Old field boundaries.

2. Hollows

3. Old field boundary

8. Pond

11. Old field boundary

14. Track

#### **Category E - Sites of potential value**

4. Hollow/platform. No action required.

7. Hollow/platform. Re-route easement, avoid accidental damage and carry out watching brief.

### **6.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are no features present on the route of the easement as advised which need hinder the construction and so there are no preconditions about the route or the positioning of the spoil dumping.

Although there are a number of features on or close to the proposed pipeline route, most are of a minor character. Those features which are of greater or potential value can either be avoided or be mitigated by watching and recording briefs.

The following recommendations are made:

#### **A. Before construction**

1. There should be an archaeologist present during the marking out of the easement in the area of features 7 and 9.

#### **B. During construction**

1. There should be a general watching brief of the topsoil stripped easement.
2. There should be a watching brief to allow observation of the excavated trench with basic recording, as required.

#### **C. After construction**

There should be allowance for a proper level of archiving of any resulting records and of a report

### **7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **7.1 Unpublished Sources**

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Sites and Monuments Record  
University of Wales, Bangor, Archives.  
(Baron Hill mss, Parciau mss.)  
Ynys Mon Council, Llangefni Archives  
(WM716 Welsh language typescript)

#### **7.2 Maps**

Ordnance Survey maps:

2" 1818-20. Revised 1836-8  
1" first edition, c. 1838  
1:2,500 1900 and 1925

Tithe maps and schedules c. 1840

John Evans Map of North Wales (1/2") 1797

#### **7.3 Published Sources**

Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. *List of Scheduled Ancient Monuments*.

Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*.

Carr, T., 1971-2. The Extent of Anglesey, 1352, *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society*.

Jones, G.R.J., 1955. The distribution of medieval settlement in Anglesey, *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society*, 27-96.

Jones-Pierce, T. 1951. Medieval Settlement in Anglesey, *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society*, 1-33.

Richards, M., 1972. *An Atlas of Anglesey*. Cyngor Gwlad Mon.

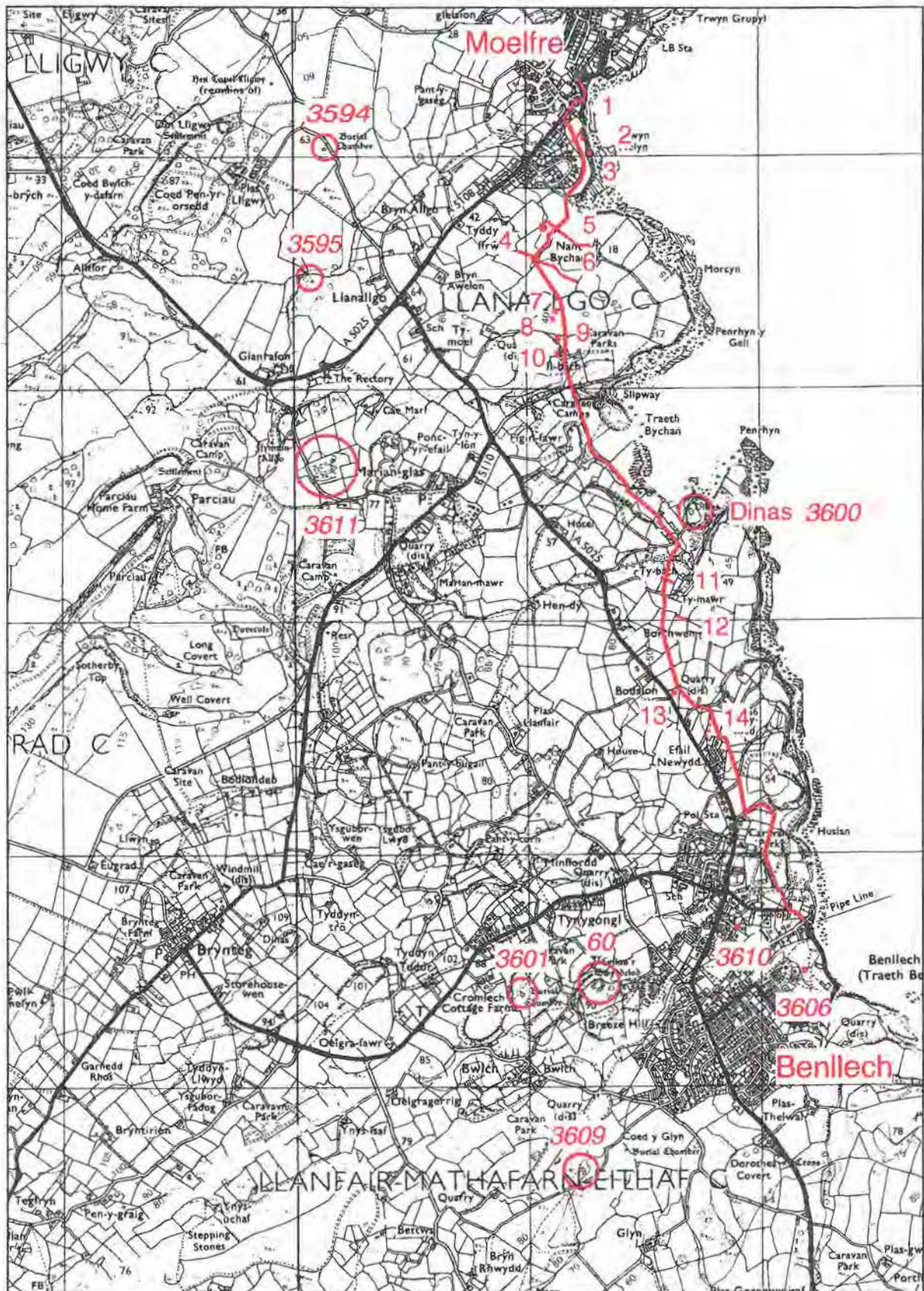
## 8.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological assessment was carried out of the route of the proposed pipeline. The work involved a desktop study of existing records followed by a field walkover. The desktop study included examination of records held in the Gwynedd Sites and Monuments Record and searches of other records and maps in archives at Bangor and Llangefni. The field work involved walking all of the route of c. 4km with observation of a corridor of approximately 100m width (except where access was denied) with brief recording and assessment of all features.

A total of 14 features were recorded over the whole route of which most lie near to the route but need not be affected by it. It is considered that there are no features lying directly on the planned route which merit changing the route although there is one feature for which a minor deviation can be made and four features of significant value or potential for which specific watching briefs with basic recording are recommended. Since the area of the route is one which has been well settled throughout all periods in the past and in which many features are likely to have been obscured by post-medieval farming a general watching brief and basic recording of the topsoil stripped area and of the excavated pipe trench is recommended.



# Moelfre to Benllech Sewage Pumping Main Archaeological Assessment G1453



**YMDDIRIEDOLAETH  
ARCHAEOLEGOL  
GWYNEDD  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
TRUST**

Title: Location of Archaeological Features

Dwg. no: 1453 /01

Scale: 1:25,000

Client: DWR CYMRU / WELSH WATER







