

# **TAN Y FOEL SEWER REQUISITION**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF (G1491)**

**REPORT NO. 277**

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**Prepared for  
HYDER CONSULTING LTD  
December 1997**

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### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Hyder Consulting Ltd have constructed a new sewer pipeline between Cilfoden, at NGR SH62846704, and Tan y Foel, at NGR SH63046720, on behalf of Gwynedd Council. New sewer pipes were also installed along the road both to the east and to the west of Tan y Foel and along the road to the south past numbers 1-10 Tan y Foel. The work was undertaken by the contractors Sorfleet Civil Engineering Service Ltd between October and December 1997.

The pipeline is less than 200m to the east of the Iron Age hill fort of Pen-y-gaer at NGR SH62836725 and there are many prehistoric settlement sites on the slopes of Moel Faban to the north. Therefore Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service, as advisers to Welsh Water, recommended that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during pipeline construction.

### **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AIMS**

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust was employed to carry out an archaeological watching brief along the line of the pipeline and to fully record any sites identified.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The construction work took place between October and December 1997. The archaeological watching brief was conducted in phases to accompany the top-soil stripping and subsequent trenching. All potential sites noted were examined to ascertain their archaeological potential and more fully examined if deemed appropriate.

### **4 RESULTS**

Top-soil stripping was monitored between 20<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October. The southern half of the pipeline, from NGR SH62846704 to SH62966709, consisted of a brown humic soil overlying a pebbly sub-soil. The northern half of the pipeline, from NGR SH62966709 to SH63046720, consisted of peat and occasional large boulders over blue/gray stony clay. The only archaeological feature identified during the top-soil stripping was a spread of burnt stone, extending to approximately 3m diameter, at the northern end of the pipeline, at NGR SH63036718. It was located on the northern bank of a small stream running north west to south east across the easement corridor. The spread consisted of small angular fragments of local burnt stone. A trial excavation showed the layer of stones to be lying on the peat suggesting it was the remains of a burnt mound which had been redeposited during previous excavation of the area for field drainage. The remains of this feature are shown in Plates 1 & 2, taken before it was covered with spoil from the trenching phase of work.

Trenching began at the south end of the pipeline and was monitored from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 17<sup>th</sup> November. The trench confirmed the stratigraphy previously observed. The peat was particularly deep towards the northern end of the pipeline, at NGR SH63026715, and the underlying clay was viscous preventing the insertion of the sewer pipe. The line of the pipe was therefore re-routed to the east side of the easement corridor and then angled to rejoin the original route. This necessitated the transfer of spoil from the east side of the easement corridor to the west which covered the remains of the burnt mound.

Trenching was also monitored along the roads around Tan y Foel where it was found that the road and the buildings were constructed on very stony boulder clay with frequent large boulders. No features of archaeological significance were found.

### **5 SUMMARY**

The watching brief was carried out along the length of the sewer pipeline from 20th October to 17th November. The only feature of archaeological significance was the spread of burnt stone suggesting the presence of a burnt

mound near by. These mounds, dating from the Bronze Age c. 2000 BC, are found on the banks of streams and are the remains of a cooking process. The mound would have built up from discarded stone around a central trench containing a trough, of stone or timber construction, in which water was boiled using local stones heated on a fire.

The peat in the northern half of the pipeline contained at least three ancient tree stumps. These appeared to be pine trees suggesting that the peat accumulation was of early post glacial date i.e. predating the burnt mound. The burnt stones, however, were clearly re-deposited on the peat.

No other archaeological features or finds were noted during the course of the watching brief.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust would like to thank Sorfleet Civil Engineering Service Ltd for their cooperation and particularly Glyn Williams, the site foreman, for his assistance.





**PLATE 1 - Remains of burnt mound from the east**



**PLATE 2 - Remains of burnt mound from the north**



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