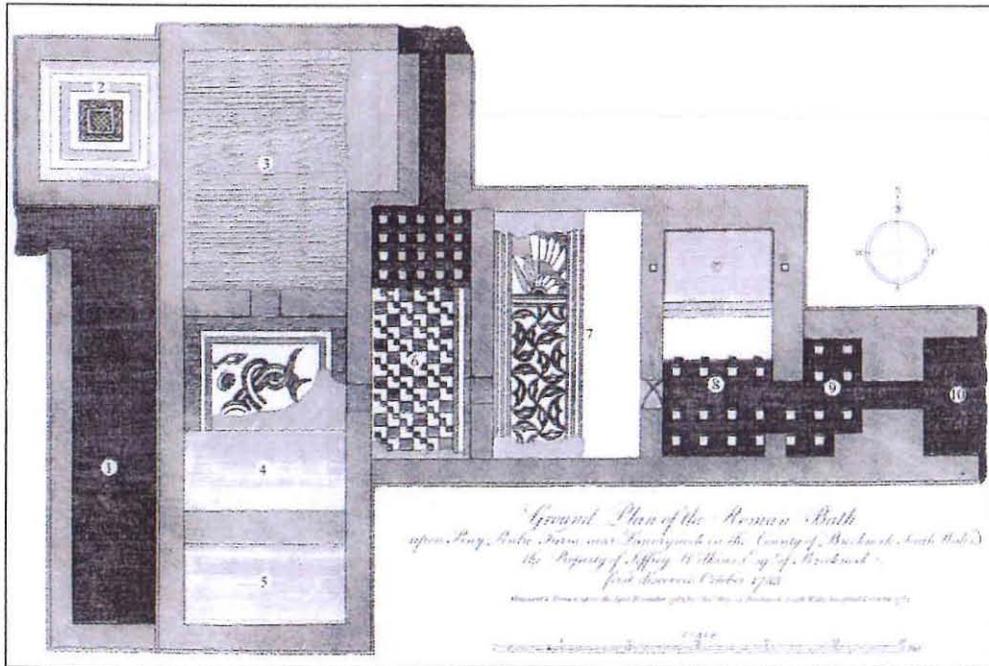


CPAT Report No 963

Roman Settlements

The Scheduling Enhancement Programme



CPAT HER
 Date passed to HER – DEC '08
 Confidential until – CHECK w. RH, NSRS
 Added to CPAT bibliography? –
 Project area digitised? –
 Ready for filing (record complete)? –

CPAT Report No 963

Roman Settlements

The Scheduling Enhancement Programme

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November 2008

Report for Cadw

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Roman Settlements

1 The Scheduling Enhancement Programme: Introduction

This brief report covers one element of a scheduling enhancement programme extending to all four Welsh Archaeological Trusts which was initiated by Cadw in 2008. It was needed to inform their thinking on priorities for scheduling enhancement in the two years up to April 2010 when the provisions of the Heritage Reform White Paper, it was hoped, were due to be implemented.

A scoping study was conducted at Cadw's request in the second quarter of the financial year 2007/8, to identify in very general terms the number of sites and features recorded in the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) that still needed to be assessed in order to complete the scheduling programme for prehistoric and Roman sites in the region, taking the study from the earliest times through to 400 AD.

The scoping report was submitted to Cadw in September 2007 and was discussed at a meeting of the trusts' directors and Cadw on 3 October. This was followed by a further meeting between the trusts and Dr Mike Yates on 7 November, as a result of which some preliminary work on a general scheduling enhancement programme across the whole of Wales was conducted by some but not all trusts during the remainder of 2007/8. All four trusts are currently involved, at the time of writing, in this programme, with a view to completing it by the end of the financial year 2009/10.

A series of enhancement programmes had already taken place during previous years across Powys and the former county of Clwyd, in some cases going back into the early 1990s, to study thematically a range of monument types including: unenclosed prehistoric settlements identified through their lithic concentrations (2001-2), prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments (from 1997 until 2005/6 with follow-up programmes in two subsequent years), hut circles/round huts (from 1998 to 2008), defended enclosures of Iron Age and Roman date (in 1993, 1995, 1998 & 2006-7), Roman military establishments (2004 to 2008), and Roman roads (2002 to 2004), together with post-Roman-era studies of early medieval ecclesiastical and burial sites (2001-2003), churches and churchyards (1995-1998), and historic settlements (1992-1994). Such enhancement programmes were designed not only to identify sites which held sufficient potential to qualify them for scheduling as sites of national importance, but also to undertake a rationalisation of the HER, through the validation of authentic sites and rejection of spurious examples, the amplification of existing records as necessary, and the removal of duplicate records.

The scoping study in 2007 utilised a recent extract from the HER to identify: a) all sites and features of prehistoric and Roman date and b) all recorded examples of specific site types such as 'enclosure', 'pound', field system' and the like where the period had been defined as 'unknown'. Sites already assessed during the enhancement programmes of previous years were then removed from this database. Similarly, sites which had nothing better than a four-figure grid reference were removed in the belief that there was no realistic prospect of identifying any such site on the ground, an approach paralleling that followed by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust.

The study identified over 1600 sites (or cultural heritage assets to use the current phraseology) where assessment might be useful. Some site types such as burnt mounds, field systems including pit alignments, and caves appeared to provide in themselves typologically discrete studies, but it was equally clear that there were some areas of east and north-east Wales where concentrations of various types of site suggested that a more geographically defined approach might be a more efficient mechanism for assessment. Where a field element might be involved in the assessment, it was felt that it would be a more economical use of resources to look at the sites of varying types as a group rather than to examine them individually over different years.

The general subject of this report are those sites considered to be representative of settlement dating to the Roman period within north-east and east Wales. Occasional sites of this generic type may fall

within those areas which have been considered as geographical entities in the programme of scheduling enhancement. Most, however, lie in other parts of the region.

Table 1: Occurrence of specific sites types against geographical areas

Area	Black Mountains	Precon Beacons	Clwyd-ans	Elan Valley	Pynt	Fynydd Iiraethog	Even Valley	Wanat Valley	Wale of Clwyd	West Monts uplands
Site type										
Burnt mounds		■			■					■
Caves		■	■						■	
Mines and quarries										
Cairnfields	■	■		■						
Enclosures	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■
Field systems	■	■		■		■	■	■		
Roman settlement							■			
Roman religious sites									■	

Five research objectives, common to all the scheduling enhancement projects, were identified in the proposals for grant aid submitted to Cadw in their final version in March 2008. These were, in order:

- an assessment of the archaeological significance of the various site-types and the sites that comprise them, within both the regional and particularly the national framework.
- the identification of those sites that might merit further examination through ground survey, geophysical survey and evaluation.
- the recommendation of future management strategies, specifically including scheduling.
- the enhancement of the regional HER and through it the Extended National Database (END) maintained by the Royal Commission.
- the dissemination of information through publication if appropriate.

Particular emphasis in this study was placed on objectives b), c) and d).

2 Roman Settlements: Methodology

The initial stage of the study was wholly desk-based, firstly defining the database of relevant sites and then checking the integrity of each record by assessing the authenticity of the sites and features within it. The next phase was to establish which sites, if any, might merit a field visit that could in turn lead to the possibility of a scheduling recommendation. A basic assumption from the commencement of the project was that no site would be recommended for statutory designation without a field visit being undertaken to establish its nature and present condition. However, given the Trust's close, past involvement with the Maesderwen site in Llanfrynach, and also with Broadheath it seemed that a further visit would be of little value in assessing the sites.

An up-to-date copy of the HER was provided by the curatorial section of the Trust, and from this the total number of sites which could be considered to relate to Roman settlement outside known military installations was distinguished. A total of 51 sites were identified in the HER, of which nine were already scheduled and another eight comprised funerary and cave occupation of the Roman period, which are considered under other sections of the scheduling enhancement programme during 2008/09. Further sites were omitted because they were solely a result of excavation where neither fieldwork nor further desk-top analysis would be likely to have a material effect on the record and thus insignificant in a scheduling enhancement context. Thus the Roman ditch uncovered at Lon Hylas, Rhuddlan (PRN 101754) in 1983 points to Roman activity under the medieval town, as do the excavations in 1979-81

(PRN 102044), and also those conducted between 1969 and 1973 (Quinnell 1994, 145), but a greater appreciation of its nature and extent will only develop as more evaluation and excavation is conducted

3 Nucleated settlements

There are surprisingly few known nucleated settlements in east and north-east Wales. Whether this reflects genuine rarity or is due to limited fieldwork is not something that should be considered here. Perhaps the best known at present is Ffrith, to the north-west of Wrexham, where Roman remains have been identified intermittently over more than four hundred years, and where interest still surfaces occasionally, as with the Time Team's interventions in 2006. Two areas of Ffrith are already scheduled, both under Fl 164, to the north-west and the south-east of the crossroads at the centre of the modern village, the latter being the much larger area, and there is nothing to recommend at present to recommend any extension to the scheduled areas, or the creation of new ones. On the evidence of known discoveries and the scheduled zones, there is nothing to suggest that the Roman settlement extended south of Nant y Ffrith, but short of a thorough trawl through all the written reports on Ffrith, it is not possible to determine whether any interventions south of the stream have returned negative evidence.

Closer to Wrexham is Plas Coch (PRN 13092) which has received little attention; information is sparse though a full report on the excavations of 1995-1997 has long been promised. There now seems little chance of further discoveries as almost all of the available ground has been built over, unless the settlement extends well to the west, beyond the bypass. Brynhyfryd Park at Ruthin has also been at the heart of a controversy in the past, but the prevailing view now is that there is a settlement here, though its extent remains uncertain and its nature as a farming settlement can only be assumed.

4 Finds

It comes as no surprise to find that there are a significant number of Roman finds from across the region. Many of the 313 records indicate stray or casual finds but there are some from excavations of features of other dates and from evaluations, and a few from fieldwalking projects. Coins make up nearly half the records (148), pottery accounts for 43 records and there are 19 querns but only 11 records of tile and brick.

A cursory examination of the distribution of such finds indicates that there are some clusters which might be significant – Basingwerk, the Dyserth area, Rhos-on-Sea, Rhuddlan, St Asaph, Montgomery and Welshpool – yet most of these are urban areas where more material might be expected to turn up because of increased human activity during the last century or so. Determining whether any of these concentrations holds meaning in terms of settlement will require a more in-depth analysis than can be attempted here.

5 Site Visits

No sites were identified which unequivocally merited site visits, but one day was spent speculatively visiting locations in north-east Wales such as Ffrith, Flint and Corwen where Roman settlement is known to have been identified in the past

6 Amended Records

Of the 51 sites mentioned above, the records of 25 were enhanced, 13 of them significantly, and it is the latter only that appear in the gazetteer. It was also noted above that those sites which were already scheduled were not further assessed, but one site (PRN 100026) was subsequently found to also fall within a scheduled area, although this was not apparent in the HER record. This was at Ffrith, where

the entrance to the (scheduled) playing field from the High Street crosses Offa's Dyke, a location where Fox had found Roman material both within and beneath the dyke in his excavation there in the 1920's. Groups of individually recorded sites relating to complex settlements such as Ffrith, Brynhyfryd Park in Ruthin and Plas Coch in Wrexham have had their descriptive syntheses updated.

7 Scheduling Enhancement

From the overall picture it is clear that those Roman settlement sites of particular significance in eastern and north-eastern Wales – Holt, parts of Ffrith and Painscastle castle – are all already scheduled, either directly because of their Roman attribution or indirectly as a result of being a component of a multi-period site. The one exception is the Maesderwen Roman Villa which has been the subject of work by CPAT in the recent past. Although the villa itself, if this is what it was, remains elusive, the excavations in 1999 demonstrated that there were significant archaeological remains on the site and these are now, again, being proposed for scheduling.

Table 2: Cumulative table of scheduling enhancement programme statistics

		HER record numbers	Records assessed	Finds	Records enhanced	Records: minor changes	Site visits	SAM recs.
Vale of Clwyd	CPAT Report 948	726	168	99	25	6	8	0
Roman Settlement	CPAT Report 963	51	41	313	13	12	1	1

APPENDIX 1**SITE LIST ORDERED BY NAME**

<i>Name</i>	<i>PRN</i>	<i>NGR</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Period</i>
Broad Heath villa	23280	SO3421163463	Villa	Roman
Brompton Bridge Enclosure	5251	SO25979308	Villa	Roman
Cold Harbour field	98320	SJ2905163635	Building	Roman
Corwen Alleged Roman Buildi	102674	SJ07824345	Building	Roman
Ffrith Roman site	100020	SJ28575529	Settlement	Roman
Flint Roman site, Croes Att	57652	SJ25507210	Building	Roman
Four Crosses 'Roman Settlem	6419	SJ27071878	Occupation site	Roman
Glaniwrch Roman site	39361	SJ141253	Building	Roman
Knucklas, field 2015, Roman	72158	SO25207418	Occupation site	Roman
Maesderwen 'Roman Villa'	72367	SO06922584	Villa	Roman
Maesydd Enclosure	2193	SJ26711358	Occupation site	Roman
Maglona Roman Site	3865	SH751006	Occupation site	Roman
Rossett Roman site	84365	SJ34255873	Occupation site	Roman
Wrexham, Plas Coch Roman se	13092	SJ32595161	Farmstead	Roman

APPENDIX 2

GAZETTEER OF NEWLY ASSESSED SITES

PRN 2193 Maesydd Enclosure SJ26711358 Occupation site Roman

Old description

An apparent Roman occupation site attested by two ditches 11m apart (1.5m and 1m wide by 1.1m and 1m deep) with a 24m stretch of loose cobbling on either side, discovered during drainage work and subsequently excavated by CPAT during 1977. Sherds of BB ware from the first half of the second century in the ditch and severn valley ware in the ditch and on the cobbles. All overlain by alluvium.

New description

An apparently Roman occupation site attested by two ditches, 11m apart (one 1.5m wide by 1.1m deep, the other 1m wide by 1m deep), with a 24m stretch of loose cobbling on either side, was discovered during drainage work and subsequently excavated by CPAT during 1977. Sherds of black-burnished ware from the first half of the second century were found in the ditches and Severn Valley ware in the ditches and on the cobbles. All were overlain by alluvium. Frere (1978, 406) noted that one sherd of pottery was dated to c.100-150 AD and that the finds were in Welshpool Museum.

The field is in arable cultivation and no trace of the site is evident on the surface. Unless deep ploughing is envisaged it seems reasonable to assume that the site is protected by the alluvium cover. It lies on the flat floor of the Severn Valley.

PRN 3865 Maglona Roman Site SH751006 Occupation site Roman

Old description

Supposed site of Maglona Roman site. No evidence to support this. Maglona currently believed to be Greta Bridge in County Durham (Lloyd, J E, 1947).

The farm visit can throw no light on this reference. (CPAT Tir Gofal assessment 1999)

New description

The attribution of the Maglona in the Notitia Dignitatum is antiquarian speculation. It was referred to by Samuel Lewis in his Topographical Dictionary of Wales (1833) - pace the fatuous comment in the 1999 Tir Gofal assessment - but undoubtedly has a longer currency than the earlier 19th century. Current thinking places it with some probability at the Roman fort of Old Carlisle in Cumberland (Rivet and Smith, 1979, 407) and the link with Machynlleth as wholly fallacious (RH 2008).

PRN 5251 Brompton Bridge Enclosure SO25979308 Villa Roman

Old description

Regular sub rectangular double enclosure. Possible building with inner courtyard (a villa?). Some 70m NE-SW by 90m NW-SE (residual). Background linears possibly associated. No surface traces. Field system rather than enclosure?

New description

The cropmarks are shown on a single aerial photograph taken by CUCAP (BUG 088), and present an anomalous picture. They could represent modern drainage patterns, yet a much earlier date

certainly cannot be ruled out. The possibility of a villa, however, is far-fetched on the evidence as currently available. The site was examined by RJS in January 1991 as part of the Montgomeryshire Defended Enclosures project, but no surface evidence of any features was apparent. No significant finds were forthcoming from a rapid fieldwalk survey undertaken at the time of the visit, and it is thus likely that only excavation will clarify the nature of the site. (RS 2008).

PRN 6419 Four Crosses Roman Settlement SJ27071878 Occupation site Roman

Old description

Probable Romano-British settlement attested by various pottery finds from Four Crosses barrow excavations by CPAT during 1981 to 1985 (see par 50555 50557 50560) and coin find from Llandrinio (par 1246). No likely site yet located.

New description

A Roman settlement has been thought to exist in the vicinity of Four Crosses for some time, although evidence has mainly taken the form of random pottery finds during other work in the village. The main source was the ring ditch/barrow excavations undertaken in the 1980s by CPAT (Warrilow et al 1986).

Recent work at Four Crosses, specifically an excavation carried out near Domgay Lane (at SJ 2707 1878) between 2004 and 2006 (Havard & Hancocks 2007), revealed two adjoining Romano-British enclosures associated with a boundary ditch. No internal features were noted in either enclosure, but a contemporary field system was also investigated. Evidence of industrial processes believed to be of Romano-British origin, in the form of copper smelting residues and metalworking debris, were also present and material was recovered from a range of features including post-holes and pits. At least eight inhumation burials on a north-east/south-west alignment were recorded, together with a probable cremation. All were thought to be Romano-British in origin by the excavators, although this remains to be confirmed (RH 2008).

PRN 13092 Wrexham, Plas Coch Roman Settlement SJ32595161 Farmstead Roman

Old description

Remains of a Roman farmstead found during excavations in 1994 and 1996. Salvage excavations in 1994 revealed a number of discontinuous shallow ditches, presumably boundary markers, a corn-drying kiln, a well and a possible hearth. There was no other evidence for buildings although a quantity of roofing tile was found. Pottery dated from 1st/2nd century to 3rd/4th century.

Excavations in 1996 uncovered a 2-phased, 2-roomed, Roman stone building set in an enclosure beside a probable trackway. Several other enclosures, 2 wells, possibly 2 corn-drying ovens, an area of dense postholes and a hearth were also visible. The stone building had clearly been preceded by a post-built structure. Roman ceramics found during the excavation suggest a date range from 2nd-4th centuries AD (Wait, G A, 1996, 73).

Probable civilian settlement dependent on agriculture (Greuter, S, & Jones, S 1994, 54)

New description

The remains of a Roman settlement, perhaps but not certainly a farmstead, were found during excavations in 1994, 1995 and 1996. Salvage excavations in 1994 revealed a number of discontinuous shallow ditches, presumably boundary features and aligned mainly NW to SE but with some others at right angles, a corn-drying kiln, a well and a possible hearth. There was no other evidence for buildings although a quantity of roofing tile was found. A shallow re-cut ditch

on the northern side of the examined area formed parts of the SW and SE sides of an enclosure, its entrance excavated on the SE side. Pottery dated from the 1st or 2nd century through to the 3rd or 4th century. Palaeoenvironmental samples from pits, ditches and the corn-drying kiln indicated the presence of cereal, chaff and weed seeds.

In 1995 further excavations to the NW revealed several ditches and post-holes and the stone foundations of the corner of a building, possibly hexagonal in layout.

Excavations in 1996 uncovered a 2-phased, 2-roomed, Roman stone building - presumably that first encountered in 1995 - set in an enclosure beside a probable trackway. Several other enclosures, 2 wells, possibly 2 corn-drying ovens, an area of dense postholes and a hearth were also visible. The stone building had clearly been preceded by a post-built structure, and there were three building phases in all. Roman ceramics found during the excavation suggest a date range from 2nd-4th centuries AD.

These details have been summarised from entries in *Archaeology in Wales* vols 35-37. A watching brief 300m to the south (PRN 58188) identified no trace of Roman activity, and there are no other records of Roman finds or features from adjacent developments such as the Wrexham by-pass, the primary school or the tennis centre. This negative evidence favours a farmstead rather than a larger, nucleated settlement, but views differ and the 1996 excavation team preferring an administrative centre of small 'town' on the basis of the amount of pottery including amphorae and fine wares and the nearby discovery of a poorly recorded coin hoard. A full report combining all the evidence from the three seasons has long been promised but has yet to appear (RS 2008).

PRN 23280 Broad Heath villa SO3421163463 Villa Roman

Old description

Possible Roman villa seen as cropmark in 1995 (RCAHMW). Rectangular enclosure with possible internal buildings and second smaller rectangular enclosure to one side.

Geophysical survey and field evaluation carried out 1997, see PRN 35199.

Trial excavations revealed that it was defended by a 4m wide ditch, with an upper fill containing pottery of late C2nd - C4th date. 2 parallel linear ditches may represent a double ditched internal enclosure or 2 separate phases of enclosure. The innermost ditches enclose an area 42m N-S and 35m E-W, set slightly off-centre from the main enclosure. No internal structures were revealed.

Evidence points to a defended settlement, possibly of several phases, spanning C2-4th. A further right-angled ditch identified as a cropmark and a geophysical anomaly may represent the SW corner of a 2nd enclosure, or poss. part of a field system. 2 hearths were also excavated, suggesting small scale smithing (Burnham, B C, 1998, 374)

New description

A sub-rectangular enclosure with an entrance along the eastern side was discovered by aerial reconnaissance in 1995. Cropmarks indicated a substantial ditch enclosing an area of about 96m by 80m, within which were faint traces of further parallel linear features, possibly indicating a rectangular internal structure, leading to the suggestion that this may be the site of a villa. A second possible enclosure was also visible as a cropmark to the south-east, although only the south-west corner was apparent. Surface finds of Romano-British pottery are recorded from fields within the immediate area, although not from the field in question.

A magnetometer survey was undertaken by Stratascan during May 1997 (see PRN 35199), which

identified the southern and western sides of the main enclosure, while the northern and eastern sides were less clear. Three trenches were excavated by CPAT in 1997, two across the main enclosure, and one to investigate the second enclosure. An arc of a curving ditch found just inside the main enclosure ditch may be a drainage ditch, possibly associated with an earlier structure. This produced a single sherd of prehistoric pottery, possibly belong to the Middle Bronze Age Urn tradition, c. 1400-1000 BC.

The main enclosure was defended by a substantial ditch over 4.5m wide. Pottery from the secondary fill of the main enclosure ditch suggests that the site had been established by at least the middle to late 2nd century. Two parallel internal ditches may represent two phases, or possibly a double-ditched internal enclosure, the innermost enclosing an area 42 by 35m, set slightly off-centre of the main enclosure. Pottery from the ditches ranged in date between mid 2nd to 3rd century and 4th century. No evidence was revealed for any structures within the enclosure, but the absence of building stone, brick or tile suggests that had there been buildings within the enclosure these were probably timber.

The second possible enclosure comprised a V-shaped ditch, 1.7m wide, containing Romano-British pottery. A second ditch, 1.4m wide, was identified further to the east on a slightly different alignment, also containing Romano-British pottery. Two hearths were identified outside the enclosure which may indicate small-scale metalworking, although no evidence of metallurgical waste was recovered. The only dating evidence for this activity was a single sherd of medieval pottery from one hearth, although this may have been intrusive. Three shallow linear scoops identified close to the hearths were of unknown date and function, although their shape, size and alignment were suggestive of graves (NJ 2008).

PRN 39361 Głaniwrch Roman site SJ141253 Building Roman

Old description

It was reported to CPAT in February 2001 that Roman tiles and mosaics had been seen in a recently ploughed field belonging to Głaniwrch Farm. Informant hadn't seen site for himself and was a little unsure of its whereabouts. CPAT curatorial went to have a look, but no ploughed fields in vicinity and farmer denied knowledge of it. May alternatively be at NGR SJ13792616.

New description

It was reported to CPAT in February 2001 that Roman tiles and mosaics had been seen in a recently ploughed field belonging to Głaniwrch Farm. The informant had not seen the site for himself and was a little unsure of its whereabouts. CPAT curatorial visited the site, but found no ploughed fields in the vicinity, and the farmer denied knowledge of it. An alternative location of SJ 1379 2616 was proposed for the site by CPAT curatorial, although it is unclear on what basis this was suggested.

It seems unlikely that the original grid reference of SJ 1444 2482 is correct, as the fields there are permanent pasture and have been so for some time. It is much more probable that the finds, if correctly reported, originated in one of the fields to the north-west which are regularly ploughed, including some around SJ 141 253, where a cropmark enclosure has already been recorded in the HER (see PRNs 70856-8, 102652). (RH 2008)

PRN 57652	Flint Roman site, Croes Atti	SJ25507210	Building	Roman
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Old description

Twenty one small exploratory trenches opened in 1986 extending up to 200m from main road. Stone-footed and timber structures located. Traces of furnace with lead ore and slag. Late 1st/2nd century finds with evidence in 3rd/4th century (Weetman, M, 1986, 15-16; Frere, S S 1987, 302-303).

Geophysical survey at SJ258706 showed row of probable roasting furnaces (Frere, S S 1988, 416-17).

New description

The old grid reference for this site (SJ 259 708) seems wildly inaccurate and has been revised. The site referred to by Weetman in 1986 is now scheduled and lies at the junction of Croes Atti Lane and Chester Street. He notes in the discussion that some buildings in the area may have been industrial in character and that there appeared to be a reduction in the density of occupation beyond about 30m from Chester Road. It was considered that this may have represented some form of 'ribbon' development alongside the main Roman road leading to Chester.

A programme of geophysical survey, 1.5km to the south-south-east, was conducted by the University of Manchester and the only information then available had been relayed to Britannia (1988) by G D B Jones, and has not been superseded or elaborated on since as far as can be established. It reveals that a road was located running south towards Halkyn Mountain. The roasting furnaces had been identified from the air, presumably by Professor Jones, but these seem to have been picked up by the geophysicists. It is not clear why the two reports have been amalgamated in a single HER entry (RH 2008).

PRN 72158	Knucklas field 2015	SO25207418	Occupation site	Roman
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Old description

Possible Romano-British occupation discovered during evaluation in 1999. A number of pits and ditches were uncovered beneath a layer of hillwash. These features were largely devoid of finds, but one ditch produced several sherds of Roman pottery, and another produced a stone showing cut marks which may have been a re-used piece of a quern stone (Appleton-Fox, N, 1999).

New description

Possible Romano-British occupation was discovered during an evaluation in Knucklas in 1999. A number of pits and ditches were uncovered beneath a layer of hillwash. These features were largely devoid of finds, but one ditch produced several sherds of Roman pottery, and another produced a stone showing cut marks which may have been a re-used piece of a quern stone (Appleton-Fox, N, 1999).

The excavation report describes the Roman pottery as belonging to a Severn Valley ware bowl, dated to the 1st century AD. The stone was believed to be a broken fragment of saddle quern (and therefore presumably pre-Roman), re-used as a chopping block, although its appearance suggests it could alternatively be local stone which has been damaged by plough action; this remains to be assessed. Other features revealed in the five trenches excavated were probably Roman in date, but most remained undated.

With the exception of an access road, the assessment area had not been built on when it was visited on 9 September 2008. It did appear, however, that development was still likely in the near future. It is not known whether the next phase of the development will include further archaeological excavation (RH 2008).

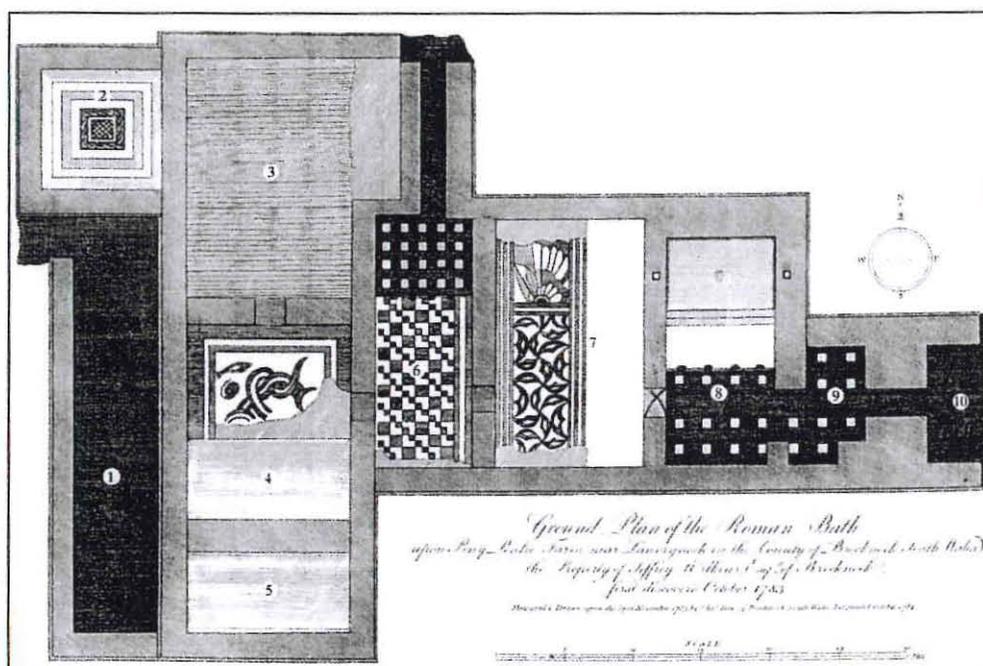
PRN 72367 Maesderwen 'Roman Villa' **SO06922584** **Villa** **Roman**

Old description

Multiple site encompassing Roman bath house (PRN 610), Mausoleum (PRN 35177), possible villa (PRN 17808) and metal-working site (80116).

Excavated by C Hay in 1783, and trial excavation and geophysical survey carried out by CPAT and Stratascan in 1997.

N.B. In my opinion it is imperative that this site is scheduled. It would appear to be unique in Powys if not in Wales. CHRMs 105

*New description*

The earliest report of discoveries at Maesderwen is from 1698 when bricks and the ruins of walls were revealed, although about 20 years previously a pavement of small stones of various colours had been uncovered, together with pottery, Roman coins and a thin, broad iron chain. The site was rediscovered in 1783 when workmen revealed small pillars 3ft 3in high, built with brick tile 7in square and 1in thick. Further excavation revealed the extent of a bath-house, published by Charles Hay in 1785 (*Archaeologia* 7, 205-210).

The bath-house (PRN 610) measured 21.64m east to west and 14.48m north to south and consisted of a range of rooms, including four with mosaic pavements, one of which depicted a sea monster. A detailed interpretation and plan of the bath-house was published by Nash-Williams (1950; see also RCAHMW 1986, 181). Hay's report also refers to the foundations of a second building located 80ft to the south, where two skulls were found, leading to the later suggestion that this may have been a mausoleum (PRN 35177). The only reported finds from the site are two spoons of silvered or tinned bronze, now in Brecon Museum, and twelve coins ranging from a denarius of Severus Alexander A.D. 222-235 to a nummus, probably of Valentinian I A.D. 364-375.

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan in March 1993 covering an area of 60 by 100m. The survey employed both magnetometer and resistivity, together with a series of transects with ground probing radar. A complex series of anomalies were identified, which were

provisionally interpreted as indicating the location of the bath-house and other structures or building platforms.

A programme of small-scale excavation was undertaken by CPAT during 1997, revealing cobble foundations and robber trenches which defined part of a building consisting of parallel walls c. 5.2m apart internally, aligned north-west to south-east, and extending for over 6m, with the south-western wall incorporating either a dog-leg or a butt-ended wall at right-angles to it. The recovery of a significant quantity of Roman pottery, brick and tile from the excavations, indicates that the building may have had a hypocaust and tiled roof. However, although only a partial plan was revealed, the dimensions do not match any of those of the bath-house recorded by Hay and it is possible that it represents the second building or 'mausoleum'.

Cobble foundations identified in another test pit may have been part of the bath-house, or at least of another sizeable structure. The precise location of the bath-house remains somewhat uncertain and it seems likely that the site was substantially levelled not long after its rediscovery in 1783. Test pits investigating the geophysical survey results revealed no obvious evidence for structures.

The dating evidence from the excavations comes entirely from the pottery, the majority of which of 3rd and 4th century date, with some 2nd-century vessels. The excavation also identified substantial deposits of iron slag which, together with the antiquarian references to iron cinders within the field called Clos y Gaveilion, suggests significant, possibly Roman, smithing activity within the immediate area (PRN 80116). Based on the collective evidence it has been assumed that the recorded remains represent part of a villa complex, although the site of the villa itself (PRN 17808) has yet to be identified (NJ 2008).

PRN 84365 Rossett Roman site SJ34255873 Occupation site Roman

Old description

None.

New description

Evidence of Roman activity on this site was first identified by metal detectorists in about 2005. Various reports suggest that the material collected or identified includes samian, coarse ware and perhaps mortaria, painted wall plaster, opus signinum, brick, box tile, imbrex fragments, stone, metal-working slag, oyster shells and reputedly two brooches and coins. The nature of the occupation remains to be determined, and little is known about its setting other than the fact that a stream cuts through it. Steven Greuter of Wrexham County Borough Council is taking an active interest in the site and is hoping that geophysics will be conducted there during the summer of 2008. In view of the potential interest and status of the site, information on it should probably be restricted at present. Potentially this is one of the most interesting sites of this period to be identified in eastern Wales in recent years. The landowner is believed to be a Mr Willis (RS 08/05/2008; with further info from Mr S Greuter 12/05/2008).

PRN 98320 Cold Harbour field SJ2905163635 Building Roman

Old description

Site recorded in former Flintshire SMR. As yet undescribed.

New description

A visit by Clwyd County Council staff in July 1980 described a three-sided area called 'Cold Harbour Field' which was defined by roads and an agricultural boundary. A tumble down single-storey cottage was present in the centre of the area, but no physical remains relating to the name

were observed. Additional data in the visit form notes that the name dates back to at least 1785, but it seems that the relation between the name and a reputed Roman site here was instigated by Cropper (1923, 117) who considered that it referred to deserted Roman buildings alongside a road, 'where a traveller in the Middle Ages could get a night's shelter'.

Although this form of name has regularly been ascribed Roman settlement connotations, place-name specialists are in broad agreement that the term was adopted in the medieval and more particularly in the post-medieval era as a derogatory term for shelter and that any association with Roman roads or settlements is coincidental. There is an early 14th-century reference to a place with this name in London (Ekwall, 1980, 116), and many more of 17th-century date across England (Coates 1984) (RS 2008).

PRN 100020 Ffrith Roman site **SJ28575529** **Settlement** **Roman**

Old description

A vast quantity of Roman finds and building evidence has arisen from this village over the last four centuries. The settlement is probably civil although the quantity of XXth Legion tiles suggest a military connection.

Chance discoveries from 1585, 1709, 1828, 1870, 1874 and 1933. Excavations in 1893, 1910, 1926 and 1967-9.

Geophysical survey of the playing field in 1987 suggested the presence of a row of structures aligned E-W (Frere, S S, 1988, pp416).

Bathroom known under village (Frere, S S, 1989, pp258-9).

Two sections scheduled (Cadw, 2000).

New description

CPAT Report 854 prepared for Cadw in March 2007 states the following and was accompanied by a location map:

Over the last four centuries, a significant quantity of Roman artefacts and structural evidence has come from in and around the modern village of Ffrith. The earliest reference dates from around 1585 when William Camden recorded structural remains which he, probably correctly, interpreted as a Roman hypocaust. Later writers recorded further discoveries, although unfortunately many were wrongly attributed to Hope or Caergwrle, including Thomas Pennant in the 1770s, who suggested that this might be an 'outpost to Deva'. This interpretation was reiterated by Bingley in 1804, who proposed the site as a 'Roman Station' (Davies 1949, 226-238).

Chance discoveries were reported in 1709, 1828, 1870, 1874 and 1933, and more organised excavations were undertaken in 1893, 1910, 1926 and 1967-69. The 1926 excavations were carried out by Sir Cyril Fox, who cut a section through Offa's Dyke which recovered Roman finds and a post hole from beneath the bank. The excavations in the late 1960s, carried out in advance of a housing development, recorded a complex stratigraphy with masonry buildings superseding timber predecessors, including what the excavators determined to be a bath house. Recent investigations by the Time Team have, however, demonstrated that what had been interpreted as the apsidal wall of a bath house was actually a curving boundary wall of much later date.

A geophysical survey was undertaken by the University of Manchester in 1987 on the site of the playing fields (SJ 285553), which suggested the presence of a row of structures aligned east to west (Frere 1988, 416). Recent geophysical survey by the Time Team on the same site appeared to

confirm the results, although subsequent excavation found no evidence for buildings and concluded that the anomalies were probably of natural origin.

There can be little doubt that there was a significant Roman settlement at Ffrith, which is now generally presumed to have been a civil one, although the quantity of XX Legion tiles that have been found suggests that there was a military connection.

Sub-surface remains of Roman occupation are thus known to have existed throughout the village, but there is no visible surface traces of any of the archaeology. The two significant areas of occupation are scheduled. A brief photographic record of the main locations was made on 29/8/2008.

Other PRNs relevant to this settlement are: 57625, 88734, 88737, 100022, 100023, 100024, & 100026 (RH 2008).

PRN 102674 Corwen Alleged Roman Building SJ07824345 Building Roman

Old description

A building of great antiquity is said to have been found in corwen in 1909 during construction behind Midland Bank. Also found was a Roman bust of Greek marble which was destroyed by enemy action 1939-45.

New description

A building said to be of great antiquity was revealed during construction behind the Midland Bank and reported in the Llangollen Advertiser on 25/2/1910. Its origin and date remains unclear. Also found was a Roman bust of Greek marble which was subsequently destroyed by enemy action between 1939 and 1945.

Not surprisingly, no visible traces of the building are evident in the vicinity of the bank (now HSBC) when it was visited on 29/8/2008. It seems possible that the construction activity refers to the brick building just to the south of the bank at SJ 0782 4345 and this grid reference has been substituted for the previous grid reference of SJ 0780 4350 (RH 2008).

APPENDIX 3

SCHEDULING RECOMMENDATIONS

Site Name: Maesderwen 'Roman Villa' **PRN:** 72367
NGR: SO 06922584 **Map:** SO02NE **Altitude:** 152m
Type: Villa **Form:** Buried feature

Scheduling criteria

<i>Period</i>	<i>Rarity</i>	<i>Documentation</i>	<i>Group Value</i>	<i>Survival</i>	<i>Fragility/Vulnerability</i>	<i>Diversity</i>	<i>Potential</i>
<i>Y</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Y</i>

Description

The earliest report of discoveries at Maesderwen is from 1698 when bricks and the ruins of walls were revealed, although about 20 years previously a pavement of small stones of various colours had been uncovered, together with pottery, Roman coins and a thin, broad iron chain. The site was rediscovered in 1783 when workmen revealed small pillars 3ft 3in high, built with brick tile 7in square and 1in thick. Further excavation revealed the extent of a bath-house, published by Charles Hay in 1785 (*Archaeologia* 7, 205-210).

The bath-house (PRN 610) measured 21.64m east to west and 14.48m north to south and consisted of a range of rooms, including four with mosaic pavements, one of which depicted a sea monster. A detailed interpretation and plan of the bath-house was published by Nash-Williams (1950; see also RCAHMW 1986, 181). Hay's report also refers to the foundations of a second building located 80ft to the south, where two skulls were found, leading to the later suggestion that this may have been a mausoleum (PRN 35177). The only reported finds from the site are two spoons of silvered or tinned bronze, now in Brecon Museum, and twelve coins ranging from a denarius of Severus Alexander A.D. 222-235 to a nummus, probably of Valentinian I A.D. 364-375.

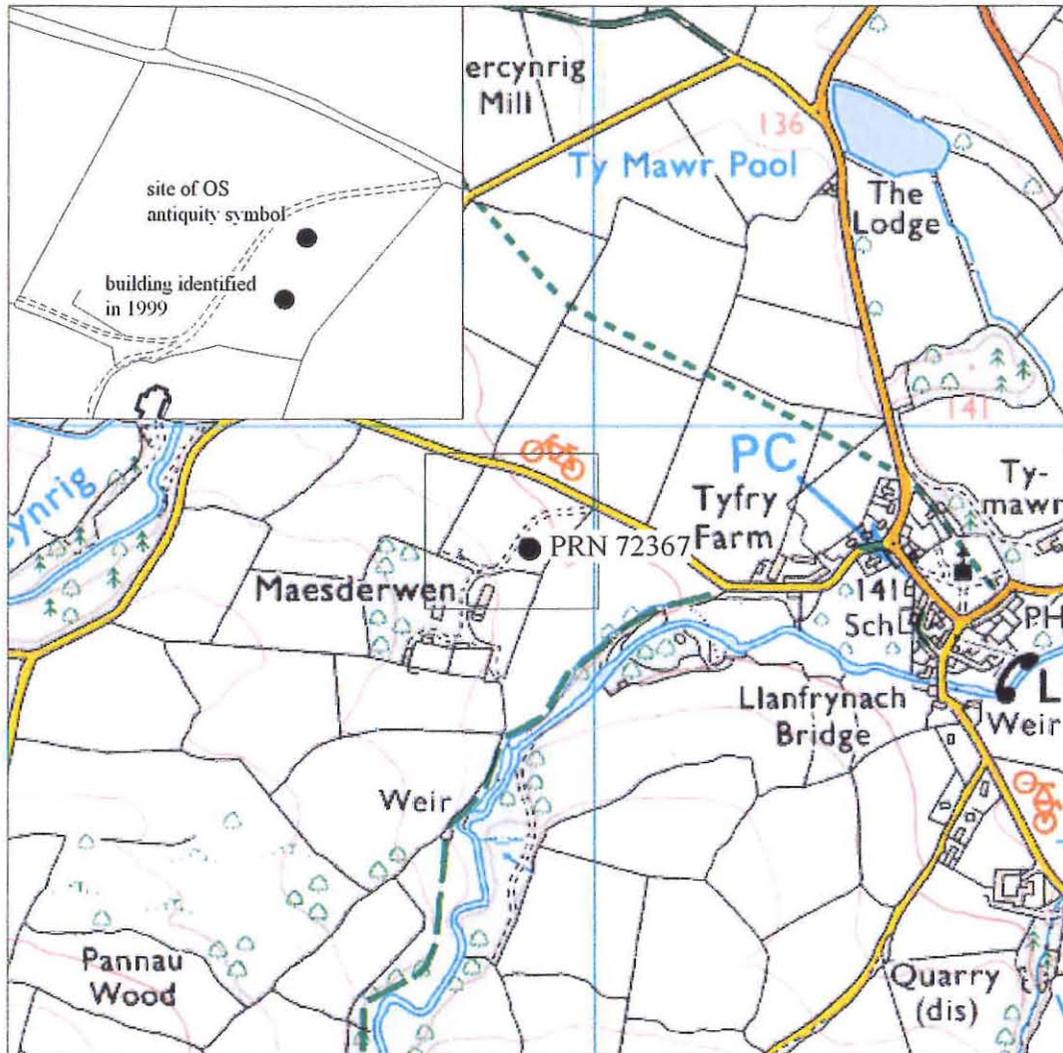
A geophysical survey was undertaken by Stratascan in March 1993 covering an area of 60 by 100m. The survey employed both magnetometer and resistivity, together with a series of transects with ground probing radar. A complex series of anomalies were identified, which were provisionally interpreted as indicating the location of the bath-house and other structures or building platforms.

A programme of small-scale excavation was undertaken by CPAT during 1997, revealing cobble foundations and robber trenches which defined part of a building consisting of parallel walls c. 5.2m apart internally, aligned north-west to south-east, and extending for over 6m, with the south-western wall incorporating either a dog-leg or a butt-ended wall at right-angles to it. The recovery of a significant quantity of Roman pottery, brick and tile from the excavations, indicates that the building may have had a hypocaust and tiled roof. However, although only a partial plan was revealed, the dimensions do not match any of those of the bath-house recorded by Hay and it is possible that it represents the second building or 'mausoleum'.

Cobble foundations identified in another test pit may have been part of the bath-house, or at least of another sizeable structure. The precise location of the bath-house remains somewhat uncertain and it seems likely that the site was substantially levelled not long after its rediscovery in 1783. Test pits investigating the geophysical survey results revealed no obvious evidence for structures.

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