

# Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales

*Archaeological Watching Brief*



*for:*  
Wales & West Utilities Limited

CA Project: CR0526  
CA Report: CR0526\_1

November 2020



**Iron and Coal Patching  
at Pen-ffordd-goch,  
Blaenavon,  
Torfaen,  
Wales**  
*Archaeological Watching Brief*

CA Project: CR0526  
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## SUMMARY

<b>Project name:</b>	Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch,
<b>Location:</b>	Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales
<b>NGR:</b>	325715 210488
<b>Type:</b>	Watching brief
<b>Date:</b>	13-14, 21, 26 October 2020
<b>SMC:</b>	MM227
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	To be deposited with National Museum Wales and the ADS
<b>Site Code:</b>	PFFG20

In October 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundwork associated with the replacement of the existing metal gas pipe with a modern plastic gas main within the scheduled monument (MM227) at the Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales.

The watching brief revealed modern services, the old metal gas pipeline, telecommunication cables, as well as an undated charcoal rich layer in Trench 2, located close to the B4246. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were recovered.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In October 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 325715 210488 (see Figure 1). This watching brief was undertaken for Wales & West Utilities Limited.
- 1.2. Cadw has granted scheduled monument consent for the replacement of the existing metal gas pipe with a modern plastic gas main within the scheduled monument (MM227).
- 1.3. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2019) and approved by Cadw.
- 1.4. The watching brief was also in line with *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

### The site

- 1.5. The underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as South Wales Lower Coal Measures Formation – Sandstone (BGS 2020) <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/>

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The monument consists of extraction features where metallic ores and coal were mined. The site comprises an exceptionally rich area of diverse features related to patching and scouring for iron ore and coal, set within a larger landscape of mineral working. The site is grouped with the scheduled monuments of Blaenavon Ironworks, Pwll Du Quarry and Garnddyrys Forge. This was an area of iron ore extraction from at least the 17th century. Ore was dug from outcrops either side of the hilltop, and water employed to scour soil and clean dug ore.
- 2.2. Extraction grew for Blaenavon Ironworks after 1788, but the area was largely worked out by the early to mid-19th century. One of the main scours (SO 2623 1060

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to 2560 1010) was in its present form before 1812, and Pen-ffordd-goch or Forge Pond (SO 2550 1085) shows that scouring around its edge was completed before 1817. Many levels were established by 1812 and were allocated in patches to named miners. Early and well-preserved features include leats, ponds, hushing dams, scours, deposition areas, tips, shaft mounds, levels, boundaries, tracks and tramroad formations. A subsidence feature clearly illustrates pillar and stall workings near SO 2579 1072. Good hushes and leats survive around SO 2555 1010. Further leats are bisected by a stockpile top extant by 1812 for limestone at SO 2544 1018. A weighing machine existed near SO 2548 1048. (Cadw)

- 2.3. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1. The general objectives of the watching brief were:
- to monitor the development groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits/features thus revealed;
  - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated project archive and a report setting out the watching brief results and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.
- 3.2. The specific objective of the watching brief is to investigate and record any remains associated with the Iron and Coal works within the scheduled monument which are exposed by the proposed development groundworks.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1. The watching brief comprised the observation by a competent archaeologist of all intrusive groundworks associated with the replacement of the existing metal gas pipe with a modern plastic gas main within the scheduled monument MM227 (Figure 2).
- 4.2. Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3. No deposits were identified that required sampling.

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- 4.4. CA will make arrangements with National Museum Wales for the deposition of the project archive. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (ClfA 2014; updated October 2020).
- 4.5. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefacts pre-dating the modern period were recovered.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1. Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see *Archaeological background*, above), the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that archaeological remains associated with the mining works either do not extend as far as or were not exposed by the development groundwork.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Majbritt Bengtson and Hazel O'Neill. This report was written by Ray Kennedy. The report illustrations were prepared by Esther Escudero . The project archive has been compiled by Richard Paxford and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

## 8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2020 *Geology of Britain Viewer*

<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/geology-of-britain-viewer/> Accessed 9 November 2020

Cotswold Archaeology 2020 *Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, m nkTorfaen, Wales: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*



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National Panel for Archaeological Archives in Wales (NPAAW) 2017 The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales

WAT (Welsh Archaeological Trusts) 2018 Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs)

## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

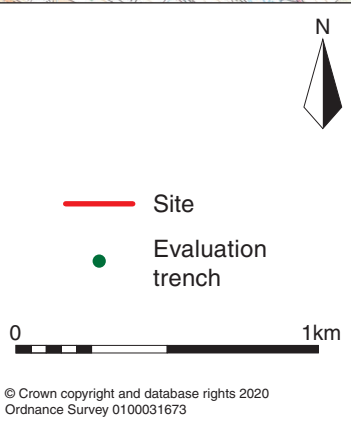
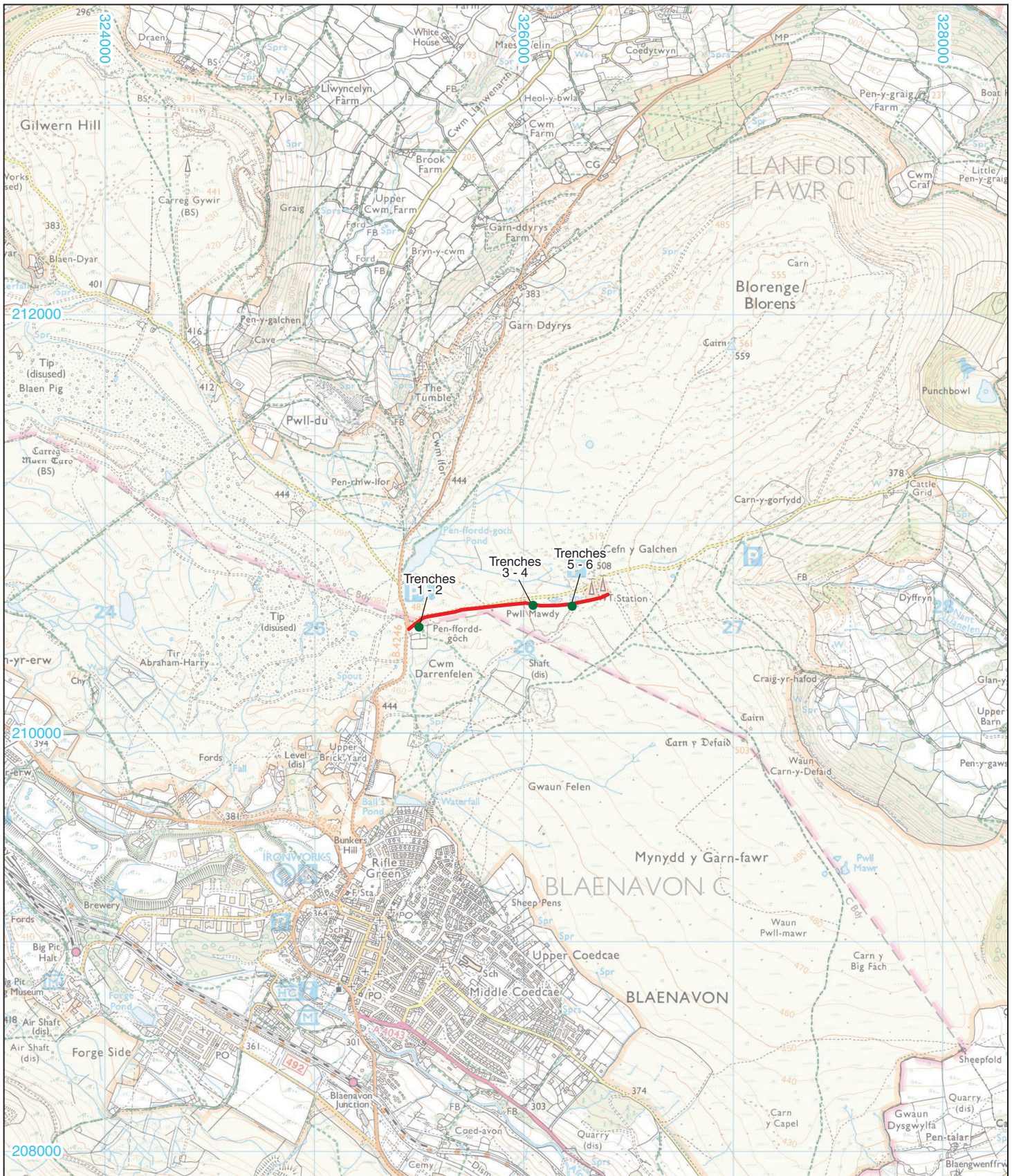
Area	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/thickness (m)
1	100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay with subangular stones inclusions, CBM, slate, animal bone	2.4	1.4	0-0.5
1	101	Fill	102	Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	102	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	103	Layer		Natural	Mid grey yellow clay	0.25	1.3	1.05
1	104	Layer		Natural	Sandstone bedrock, mid yellow grey			1.3
2	200	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay with subangular stones inclusions, CBM, slate, animal bone	2.5	1.4	0.2
2	201	Fill	201	Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	202	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	203	Fill	205	Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	204	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	205	Fill		Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	206	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	207	Deposit		Deposit	Dark charcoal, ash, burnt material, rubble, CBM	N/A	N/A	0.05
2	208	Deposit		Deposit	Dark charcoal, ash, burnt material, rubble, CBM	N/A	N/A	0.05
2	209	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, with occasional sub-angular stone inclusions	N/A	N/A	0.2-0.45
2	210	Layer		Natural	Mid grey yellow compact clay	N/A	N/A	0.45-1.3
2	211	Layer		Subsoil	Mid grey brown silty clay, with occasional sub-angular stone inclusions	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	300	Layer		Topsoil	Dark clayey compact silt	1.15	N/A	0-0.2
3	301	Fill		Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	0.2-0.62
4	400	Layer		Topsoil	Dark clayey compact silt	1.1		0-0.2
4	401	Fill		Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	0.2-1.15
4	402	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	4.5	0.95	0.44
4	403	Layer		Natural	Dark black silt	N/A	N/A	0.2-0.58
4	404	Layer		Natural	Dark black silt	N/A	N/A	0.2-0.58
4	405	Layer		Natural	Yellow grey clay with sandstone inclusions	N/A	N/A	0.58-0.76
4	406	Layer		Natural	Yellow grey clay with sandstone inclusions	N/A	N/A	0.58-0.76
4	407	Layer		Natural	Grey clay with sandstone inclusions	N/A	N/A	0.76-1.16
5	500	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt	1	N/A	0.2
5	501	Fill		Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	0.45
5	502	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	N/A	N/A	0.45
5	503	Layer		Natural	Light brown and grey clay with occasional brash stones	N/A	N/A	0.55
6	600	Layer		Topsoil	Dark grey brown sandy silt	1	N/A	0.2
6	601	Fill		Backfill	Backfill of service trench	N/A	N/A	0.45
6	602	Cut		Trench	Cut of service trench	N/A	N/A	0.45

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6	603	Layer		Natural	Light brown and grey clay with occasional brash stones			0.55
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## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales	
Short description	<p>In October 2020, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the replacement of the existing metal gas pipe with a modern plastic gas main within the scheduled monument (MM227) at the Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales.</p> <p>The watching brief revealed modern services, the old metal gas pipeline, telecommunication cables, as well as an undated charcoal rich layer in Trench 2, located close to the B4246. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.</p>	
Project dates	13, 14, 21, 26 October 2020	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work		
Future work		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site location	Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales	
Study area (m <sup>2</sup> /ha)	N/A	
Site co-ordinates	325715 210488	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator		
Project design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy	
Project Supervisor	Majbritt Bengtson, Hazel O'Neill	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	MM227	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>		
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	<b>National Museum Wales</b>	
Paper		Context sheets, matrices etc
Digital		Database, digital photos etc
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
Cotswold Archaeology 2020 <i>Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA typescript report <b>CR0526_1</b>		



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch, Blaenavon, Torfaen, Wales

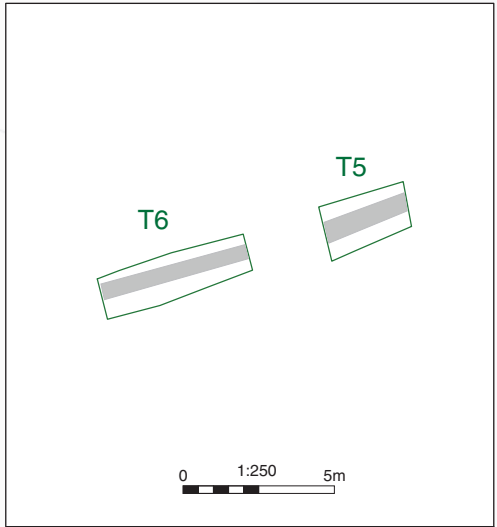
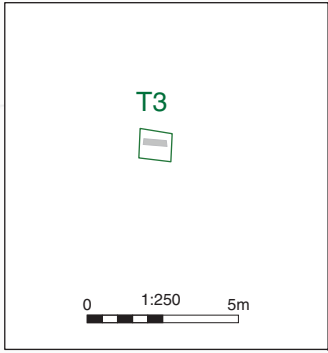
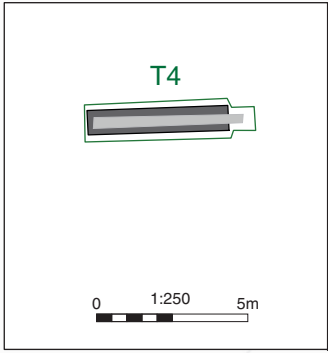
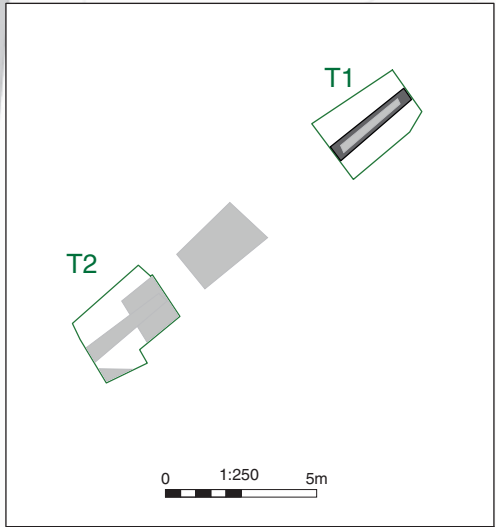
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	CR0526	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	16/11/2020	
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	<b>1</b>

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 Ordnance Survey 0100031673



- Site
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature
- Modern feature



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch,  
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**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Trench location plan

<small>DRAWN BY</small> EE	<small>PROJECT NO.</small> CR0526	<small>FIGURE NO.</small>
<small>CHECKED BY</small> DJB	<small>DATE</small> 16/11/2020	<b>2</b>
<small>APPROVED BY</small> RK	<small>SCALE</small> @A3	1:3,000





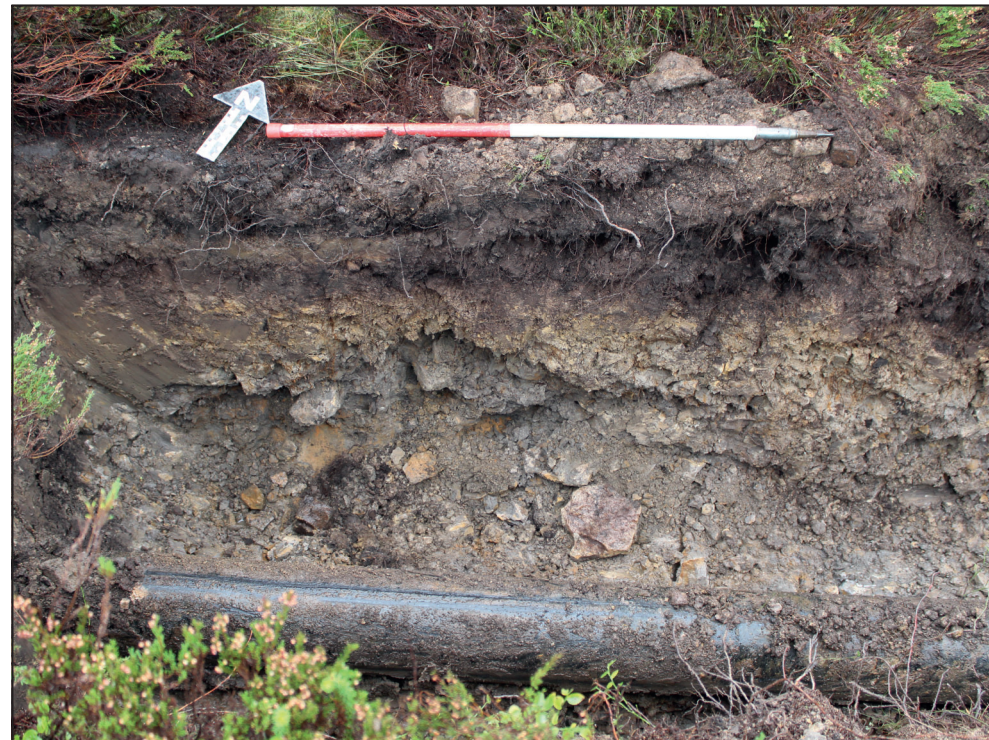
Trench 1, looking north-west (1m scale)



Trench 2, looking north (1m scale)



Trench 3, looking north-west (1m scale)



Trench 4, looking north-west (1m scale)



Trench 5, working shot


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PROJECT TITLE  
 Iron and Coal Patching at Pen-ffordd-goch,  
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FIGURE TITLE  
 Photographs

DRAWN BY	EE	PROJECT NO.	CR0526	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	16/11/2020	3
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A3	NA	

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