

# *Archaeology Wales*

## **Monks Trod, Rhayader (Powys)**

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Report No. 1668

# Archaeology Wales

## Monks Trod, Rhayader (Powys)

Archaeological Watching Brief

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## Contents

Non-Technical Summary	1
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Location and Scope of Work	1
1.2 Topography and Geology	2
1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background	2
2. Methodology	2
3. Results of the Watching Brief	3
3.1 Eastern section of scheme	3
3.2 Western section of scheme	5
3.3 Finds	8
3.4 Environmental Data	8
4. Discussion and Conclusions	9
4.1 Overall Conclusions	9
5. Bibliography and References	10

### List of Illustrations

Figure 1	General location map
Figure 2	Detailed map of working areas (eastern end of scheme)
Figure 3	Detailed map of working areas (western end of scheme)

### List of Plates

Plate 1	View south-west of work being conducted in area 1 (east end of scheme)
Plate 2	View north of large rut mark found in area 1 (eastern end of scheme)
Plate 3	View south-west of work completed within area 1 (eastern area of scheme)
Plate 4	View east of drainage grip being installed within area 2 (eastern area of scheme)
Plate 5	View south-west of probable original Monk's Trod route way to the right of the existing route, area 3 (eastern area of scheme)
Plate 6	View north-east of groundworks completed within area 3 (eastern area of scheme)
Plate 7	View east of drainage grip installed within area 4a (eastern area of scheme)
Plate 8	View south-east of drainage grip installed within area 4b (eastern area of scheme)
Plate 9	View west of drainage grip installed within area 5 (eastern area of scheme)

- Plate 10 View south of drainage grip installed within area 6 (eastern area of scheme)
- Plate 11 View south of drainage grip installed within area 7 (eastern area of scheme)
- Plate 12 View south of drainage grip installed within area 8 (eastern area of scheme)
- Plate 13 View east back along route way near to drainage grip 7 (eastern area of scheme)
- Plate 14 View south-west, north east end of area 1 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 15 Working view north-east of area 1, south west end, start point (western area of scheme)
- Plate 16 View south-east of stone kerbs 011, area 1 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 17 View south-east of stone kerbs 012, area 1 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 18 South-east facing section of re-graded route way in area 1 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 19 View north-east of re-grading works completed in area 1(western area of scheme)
- Plate 20 View south-west of re-grading works completed in area 1(western area of scheme)
- Plate 21 Displaced kerb stone found during area 1 works (western area of scheme)
- Plate 22 Motor cycle registration plate found in wheel rut 009 during area 1 groundworks (western area of scheme)
- Plate 23 View south-west of area 3a after removal of large central high standing rut (western area of scheme)
- Plate 24 View south-west of area 3a which contains preserved paved surface and kerbing (western area of scheme)
- Plate 25 View south of small grip installed within area 5 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 26 Paved surface just west of grip 5, view south (western area of scheme)
- Plate 27 View south of drainage grip installed within area 6 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 28 View south-east of drainage grip installed within area 7 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 29 Paved surface and kerbstones, found to the immediate west of area 7 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 30 Detail of kerbstone found to the immediate west of area 7 (western area of scheme)
- Plate 31 View south-west of drainage grip installed within area 8 (western area of scheme)

Plate 32	Paved/cobbled surface and kerbstones, found to the immediate west of area 8 (western area of scheme)
Plate 33	Paved/cobbled surface and kerbstones, found to the immediate west of area 8 (western area of scheme)
Plate 34	View south of drainage grip installed within area 9 (western area of scheme)
Plate 35	View south-west of drainage grip installed within area 10 (western area of scheme)

## **Appendices**

Appendix I	Figures
Appendix II	Plates
Appendix II	Context Inventory

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## **Non-Technical Summary**

*This report results from work undertaken by Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) for Powys County Council, on land at Ellan Valley, Rhayader, Powys. The report details the results of an archaeological watching brief that took place during groundworks associated with public byway surface works at (SN 89119 71154 – SN 84049 68894). The work was undertaken as a recommendation from Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust who act as archaeological advisors to Powys County Council.*

*Monk's Trod is a historic route way once used by monks of the Cistercian Abbeys connecting Abbey Cwmhir and Strata Florida. The section belonging to Pont ar Elan beside Craig Goch Dam reservoir and Strata Florida crosses over natural peat moorland and it is designated as a National Nature Reserve Claerwen (NNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (Elenydd SSSI) and Special Protection Area (Elenydd-Mallaen).*

*During the watching brief a number of paved/metalled surfaces was identified which are considered to relate to the Monks Trod track way. All surfaces identified over the course of the works were not affected by any of the intrusive works undertaken, advocating preservation in situ.*

*All work was undertaken to the Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief as set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Location and Scope of Work**

In March 2018 Archaeology Wales Ltd (AW) was commissioned by Powys County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during surface works on a public byway open to all traffic crossing land at Ellan Valley, Rhayader, Powys (SN 89119 71154 – SN 84049 68894)(Figures1&2).This work relates to the maintenance of eroded sections of pathway, as well as the installation of a number of small drainage grips designed to help with water management along the route of the track way (Figures 3 & 4). The local planning authority is Powys County Council.

Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Development control acting as archaeological advisors recommended that an archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks due to the high potential of encountering buried archaeology.

Prior to works commencing an approved Specification for an archaeological watching brief was produced by AW in accordance with the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA 2014), which was designed to provide an approved scheme of archaeological investigation to be implemented during the groundworks.

The watching brief took place on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 under the supervision of Andrew Shobbrook.

## **1.2 Topography and Geology**

The intrusive works were focused on two specific areas of the Monk's Trod route. An area to the west (centred on SN 84049 68894), located SW of Pont ar Elan, stretching for c. 1.08km, and approximately 350m AOD; and an area to the east (centred on SN 89119 71154) falling within the Claerwen Natural Reservoir and stretching for 1.3km, and c. 400m AOD (see Figure 1, 2 and 3).

The underlying geology is composed of Llandovery rocks, including mudstone, siltstone and sandstone formed during the Silurian Period. The superficial deposits are of alluvial origin and are composed of clay, silt and sandstone, formed during the Quaternary period (BGS 2018).

## **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The areas subjected to highway maintenance works form part of the Monks Trod, an ancient road located across the Cambrian mountains, from the Teifi Basin to the Wye Valley. The road seems to have linked Abbey Cwmhir to Strata Florida. It is assumed that the route way as well as being important to the Cistercian Monks, would also have been important to the local civilian population as a route way and would have been part of the organisational network formed by the Welsh Prince Rhys ap Gruffydd of Deheubarth who has the successful ruler within this area during the 12th century (Fleming, A. 2009-P77). The route way runs west from Abbey Cwmhir, crossing Moel Hywel (from Cwm-hir Bank) and descending to St Harmon, before crossing the River Wye at Pont Marteg, and rising up towards Pont ar Elan. At this point it routes south-west, passing north of the western point of the Claerwen Reservoir, before passing the Teifi Pools and descending through Troed y Rhiw to Strata Florida. Some stretches of the road survive as a terraced road which in some areas contain surfaces of stone paving/metalling which is still intact.

## **2. Methodology**

The archaeological watching brief followed the methodology set out within the approved Specification (Appendix II).

All groundworks were carried out using a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Along the eastern half of the scheme groundworks included the maintenance of two separate segments of pathway along with the installation of seven separate drainage grips. Maintenance of the two separate segments of pathway firstly included the back filling of a series of wheel ruts caused by vehicles as well as the removal of a high central linear rut which was present within the centre of the track way for around 20m on the far eastern side of the works also caused by previous 4x4 vehicle use.

Within the western half of the scheme groundworks undertaken included the re-grading of around 75m of pathway as well as the excavation of six separate drainage grips.

All of the above-mentioned works have been numbered separately and annotated on two separate plans depicting both eastern and western phases of groundworks.



The exposed deposits were subsequently recorded by measured sketch drawings, high resolution digital photographs (using a 10MP camera) and written records using AW recording systems. A register of all contexts and photographs was also made.

The on-site archaeological work was undertaken by Andrew Shobbrook. The overall management of the project was undertaken by Dr Irene Garcia Rovira.

All works were undertaken in accordance with the ClfA's *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014) and current Health and Safety legislation.

### **3. Results of the Watching Brief (Plates 1-35)**

#### **3.1 Eastern section of Scheme (SN 8844 7118 - SN 8980 7181)**

##### **3.1.1 Work area 1 (SN 8980 7181)**

Within this area a series of deep ruts had been created due to previous motorised activities, which in some cases had created substantial linear voids measuring between 0.10m and 0.40m deep. Groundworks in this area included filling of the wheel ruts within a total area measuring 3 wide northwest-southeast by 56m long southwest-northeast. To accomplish this the tracked excavator removed any high areas of rutting and use the waste topsoil to backfill the underlying voids creating a leveled surface.

The underlying natural (002) was formed of a moderate to firmly compacted light to mid-grey clay that contained rare inclusions of small sub-angular stones and was first viewed at 0.10m below existing ground level. Overlying the natural within area 1 was a moderately compacted light grey brown silty clay topsoil (001), which was observed as having an almost peat like texture. This deposit varied in depth between 0.10m and 0.25m deep and contained occasional small sub-angular stones. No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

##### **3.1.2 Work area 2 (SN 8970 7164)**

Groundworks undertaken within this area included the construction of a single drainage grip gully. The grip measured 3.5m long by 1m wide and was cut through the topsoil (001) for a depth of around 0.30m. No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

##### **3.1.3 Work area 3 (SN 8965 7160)**

A second area of route way consolidation was undertaken within area 3, which included the backfilling and re-grading of the route way surface to provide a leveled surface for byway users to walk upon. Also undertaken was the removal of a high standing linear rut which was present within the center of the track way for around 20m. This second area of consolidation works encompassed an area in total measuring 120m long east-west by 2m wide north-south.

During groundworks undertaken within this area the natural substrate was formed of a firmly compacted light orange yellow clay – (004) - which contained frequent inclusions of small sub-angular stones and was viewed first at 0.20m below existing ground level. This in turn was overlain by topsoil 001 measured which measured around 0.20m deep within this area.

The remains of a slightly curving linear depression viewed in the form of a hollow-way was noted running parallel to the immediate north of the existing route way and is suspected to be the original route of the Monks Trod.

#### **3.1.4 Work area 4a (SN 8874 7125)**

Groundworks undertaken within area 4a comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured roughly 1m long by 0.8m wide and 0.30m deep and was cut into peat deposit (001). No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

#### **3.1.5 Work area 4b (SN 8874 7125)**

Groundworks at area 4b comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured around 1.5m long by 1m wide and 0.30m deep and was cut into peat deposit 001. No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

#### **3.1.6 Work area 5 (SN 8866 7124)**

Groundworks undertaken within area 5 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured roughly 3m long by 1m wide and 0.4m deep and was cut into peat deposit (001). No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

#### **3.1.7 Work area 6 (SN 8861 7122)**

Groundworks at area 6 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured roughly 3m long by 0.8m wide and 0.4m deep and was cut into peat deposit 001. No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

#### **3.1.8 Work area 7 (SN 8852 7121)**

Groundworks at area 7 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured around 2.5m long by 0.8m wide and between 0.3m and 0.4m deep and was cut into peat deposit 001. No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

### **3.1.9 Work area 8 (SN 8844 7118)**

Groundworks undertaken within area 8 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured roughly 3m long by 1m wide and 0.4m deep and was cut into peat deposit 001. No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

## **3.2 Western section of Scheme (SN 8322 6870 - SN 8431 6917)**

### **3.2.1 Work area 1 (SN 8822 6870 to SN 8326 6878)**

Groundworks completed within area 1 comprised the re-grading of the original Monks Trod route way down to the start of the natural soil horizon. This area of ground works encompassed a total area measuring roughly 75m long northeast-southwest by 2m wide northwest-southeast. The original estimate for the length of pathway to be re-graded was set at 90m long, however, this was reduced by around 15m in length at the far north eastern end of works due to the presence of a preserved section of stone paving and kerbing which is assumed to belong to the original route way of the Monks Trod. The natural substrate (008) was formed of a firmly compacted light-yellow grey clay which contained frequent inclusions of small sub-angular stones and was first revealed at 0.40m below existing ground level.

Two separate areas of kerbing were observed within this area of works both of which are thought to define the original line of the Monks Trod route way. Both areas were found on the south-eastern side of the route way and both sets were similarly constructed of two large natural stones arranged in a line along the edge of the path to form the remains of a kerb. The first and most westernmost set of stones (011) was partially exposed during the regrading works and measured 1.20m long northeast-southwest by 0.40m wide and survived to a high of 0.40m. This surviving segment of kerbing was laid in a dry-stone fashion and comprised two large naturally shaped stones which had been submerged and buried by an overlying formation of peat. This area of kerbing was preserved in situ.

A second set of stones also considered to be the remains of kerbing (012) was observed 50m to the north-east of the start point of the works undertaken in area 1. This second area of kerbing lay to the south-east and outside the line of re-grading and appeared only partially on view due to being submerged by the overlying peat formation. This second area of kerbing was preserved and left in situ.

A fifth flat rectangular shaped stone was revealed during ground works lying flat face down within the southern edge of the track way and is assumed to have been displaced out of position and is not the remains of in situ kerbing.

The overlying topsoil within this area was comprised of a well formed loosely compacted dark brown organic peat (007) which measured around 0.40m in depth.

A series of motor cycle wheel ruts (009) were revealed to have cut into the natural substrate within the central area of the route way. On average each rut marks measured between 0.20m and 0.40m wide by between 0.10m and 0.40m deep and continued for the entire length of

the reinstatement works conducted within area 1. Within the motor cycle ruts a dark brown peat had been deposited (O10) which contained modern finds including a single 1980's motor cycle registration plate and two wooden survey pegs.

### **3.2.2 Work area 2 (SN 8326 6878)**

Initial observations undertaken within this area on the day of the works concluded that without further investigation, re-grading works of the route way could not be undertaken within this area. This was decided due to the uncertainty of the true route of the pathway and the concern of accidentally truncating hidden preserved surfaces belonging to the historic route way.

### **3.2.3 Work area 3a (SN 8330 68 79 to SN 8336 6881)**

Within this area of the scheme the proposed groundworks included the removal of loose stones from the route way and the reduction in height of a large central rut which had formed throughout the central area of the Monks Trod within this location. In total the large central rut was reduced in height successfully for around 30m in length. Although the original proposed works concluded that around 60m of clearance work should be undertaken within this part of the scheme, however, this was reduced by around 30m in length due to the presence of well-preserved areas of stone paving and kerbing being found at the mid to western end of this work area.

### **3.2.4 Work area 3b (SN 8336 6881)**

Proposed works to be undertaken within area 3b included the removal of a number of loose stones and cobbles to accomplish a firm level safe surface for this part of the route way. Due to a number of large stones and cobbles appearing to be in-situ within this area no groundworks were undertaken due to the concern of the possible accidental removal of any in-situ remains of the Monks Trod which were found largely throughout this area.

### **3.2.5 Work area 4 (SN 8361 6882)**

At area 4 reinstatement works proposed included the re-grading of the Monks Trod route way at this location. Due to the uncertainty of the true route of the Monks Trod within this area it was decided that no groundworks should be undertaken until further techniques could be employed.

### **3.2.6 Work area 5 (SN 8337 6882)**

A number of kerb stones were observed along the southern edge of the route way at this location, none of which were affected by the works. A natural spring to the north of the route way had formed a ford at this location. Therefore, a small grip was installed, measuring 0.50m wide by 0.50m long and 0.30m deep and was placed in-between a small gap situated between two in-situ kerbstones on the route ways southern side. None of the kerb stones located in this area were affected by the installation of the grip and remain in situ.

During the installation of the grip only peat formation (005) was removed and also a loosely placed medium sized stone assumed to be the remains of displaced kerb which had probably been removed previously through erosion. This single stone had been deposited at roughly 0.30m to the south of the existing line of the southern edge of the route way. Peat deposit (005) was formed of a dark brown waterlogged peat that measured a excavated depth of around 0.30m maximum.

Well preserved sections of paving were also encountered immediately to the west of the ford and were unaffected by the works undertaken.

### **3.2.7 Work area 6 (SN 8341 6882)**

Groundworks undertaken within area 6 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured roughly 9m long by 0.30m wide and 0.30m deep and was cut into peat deposit (005). No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

### **3.2.8 Work area 7 (SN 8341 6882)**

Groundworks at area 7 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured around 3m long by 1m wide and 0.30m deep and was cut into peat deposit (005). No archaeology was revealed within this location of the scheme, although the remains of paving and kerbing were evident just to the west and east of this area.

### **3.2.9 Work area 8 (SN 8358 6877)**

Groundworks undertaken at area 8 included the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way where a large quantity of water had accumulated. The grip measured roughly 12m long by 1m wide and 0.4m deep and was cut into peat deposit (005). No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

### **3.2.10 Work area 9 (SN 8414 6904)**

Groundworks at area 9 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured around 6m long by 0.8m wide and 0.25m deep and was cut into peat deposit (001). No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

### **3.2.10 Work area 10 (SN 8431 6917)**

Groundworks completed within area 10 comprised the installation of a single drainage grip gully on the southern down slope side of the route way. The grip measured roughly 12m long by 0.70m wide and 0.40m deep and was cut into peat deposit (005). No archaeology was revealed within this area of the scheme.

### **3.3 Finds**

Only three finds of modern date were recovered during the archaeological watching brief: two survey pegs and a 1980s motor cycle registration plate.

### **3.4 Environmental Data**

No deposits were encountered that were suitable for environmental sampling.

## **4. Discussion and Conclusions**

### **4.1 Overall Conclusions**

During groundworks undertaken along the eastern section of the scheme no paved/metalled surfaces were revealed. The surrounding landscape within this area of the scheme appeared to comprise of medium to high flat rolling hills with no outcropping of bed rock visible which may suggest that an easily accessible source of stone was difficult to obtain within this area. However, during the excavation of grip 4a the remains of bedrock were visible along the northern edge of the path which may suggest that the route way within this area may have a solid enough underfoot not to warrant any paved/ metalled surfaces being laid during construction of the route way within this location.

Whilst undertaking ground works within area 3 the remains of a linear sunken hollow-way was observed running parallel to the existing route way on its northern side. Due to its strong profile in the landscape it could be considered that the hollow-way may be the original route of the Monks Trod which has since been disused due to the higher ground to the south being more easily accessible.

During groundworks undertaken within the western section of the scheme, in situ stone paved/metalled sections of track way were identified some of which appeared to contain the remains of kerbing. Any areas identified to contained preserved stone paved/metalled areas of track way and which may have been affected by intrusive ground works were avoided in order to maintain in situ preservation. It is considered plausible that due to the presence of bedrock outcropping within this area access to sources of stone would have been readily available which may account for the many segments of paved/metalled surfaces found constructed upon the route way within this area.

The main concentrations of paved and metalled areas encountered during the course of the watching brief were found solely evident within the western half of the scheme and located between work areas 1 and 8.

Due to only two small segments of stone kerbing being found within the westernmost area 1, it could be assumed possible that this area of the route way may have undergone historic robbing of stone. The robbed stone would then have possibly been in relation to the construction of nearby farmsteads and field enclosures during the post medieval period. It is also possible that this may have also happened within other locations of the Monks Trod route way.

Due to the presence of stone paved/metalled surfaces in certain areas of the route way, it is recommended that they are adequately protected, for example, with geotextile and appropriately sealed to constrain further erosion or destruction.

## **5. Bibliography and References**

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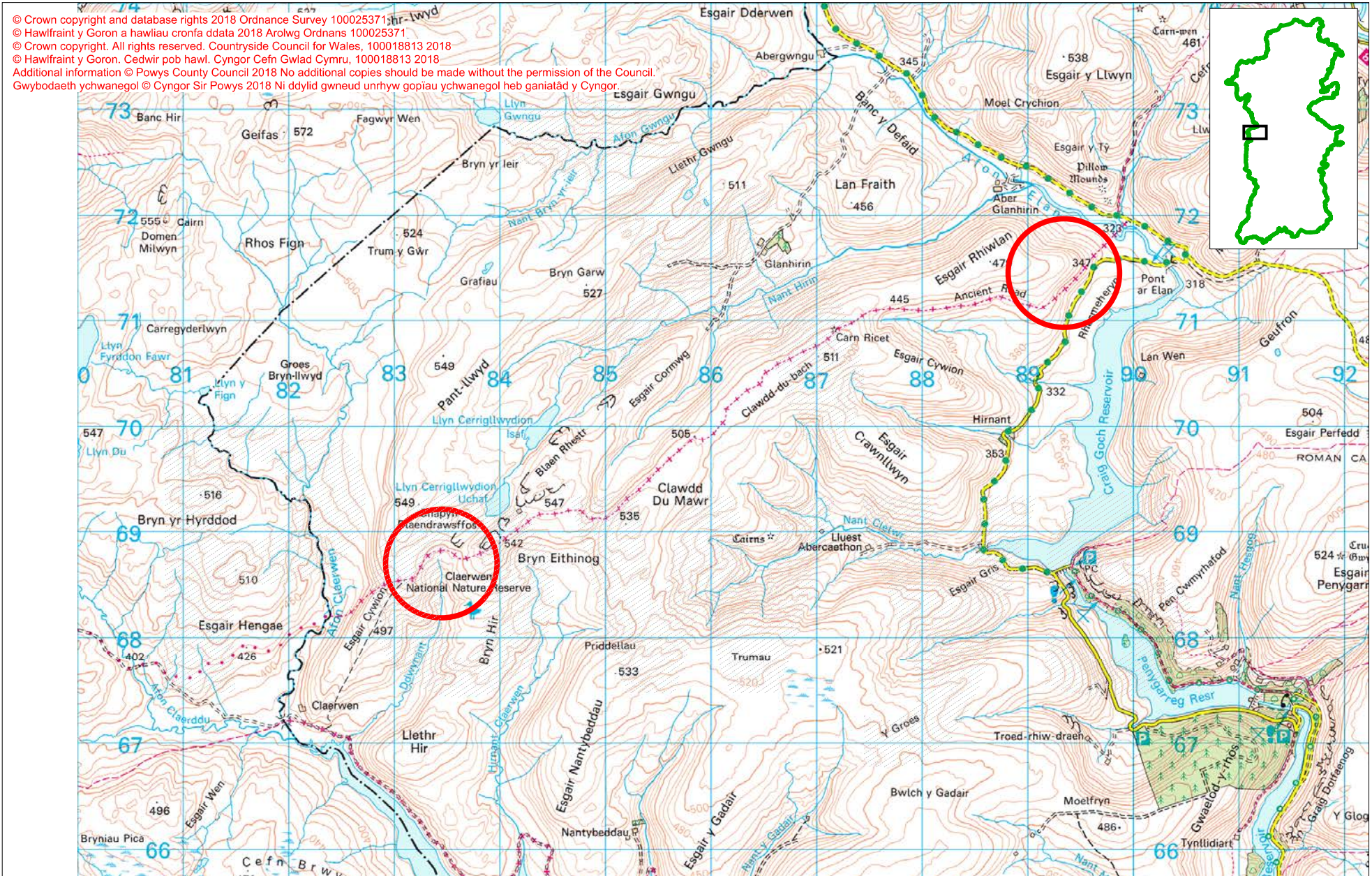
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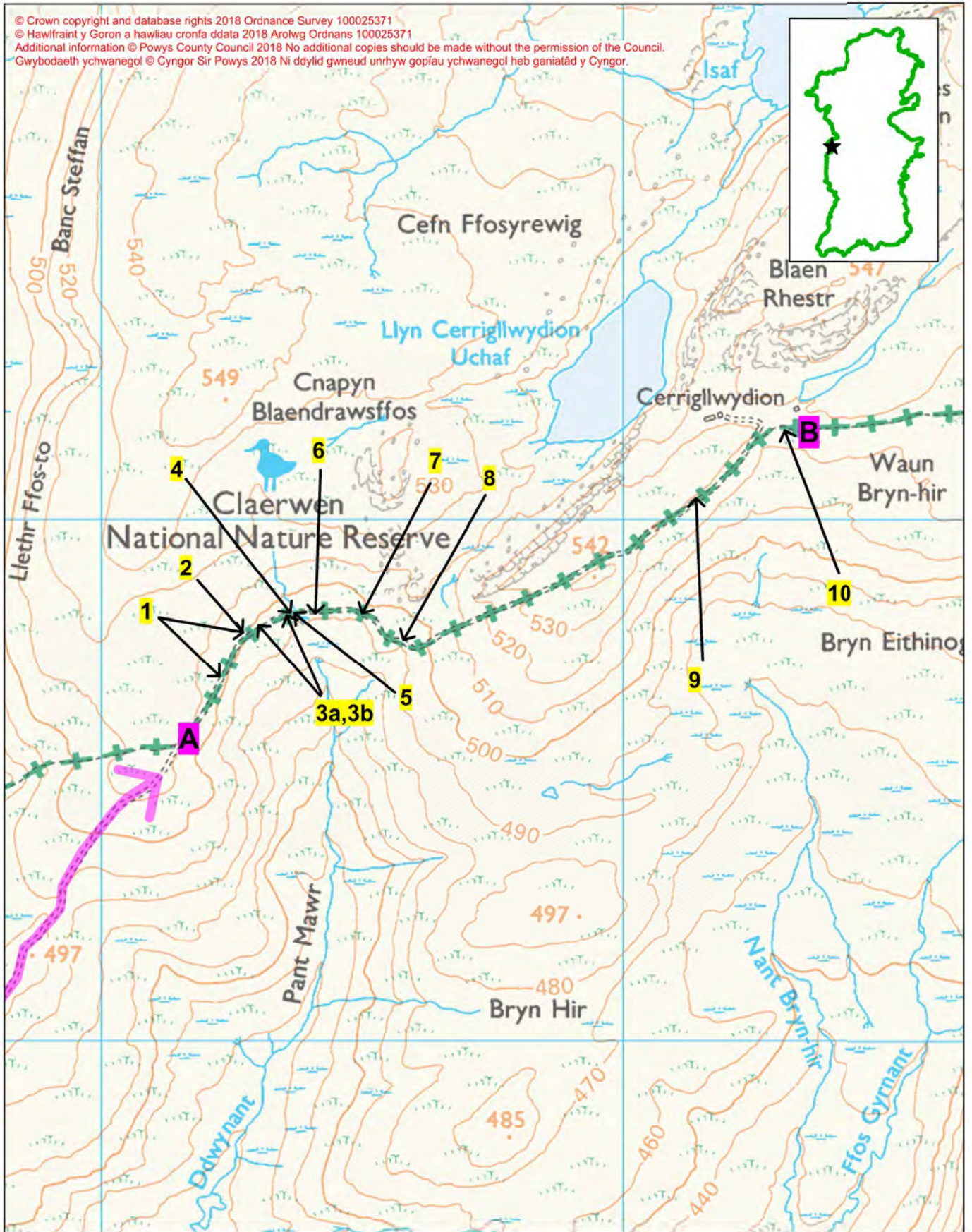
**APPENDIX I:**



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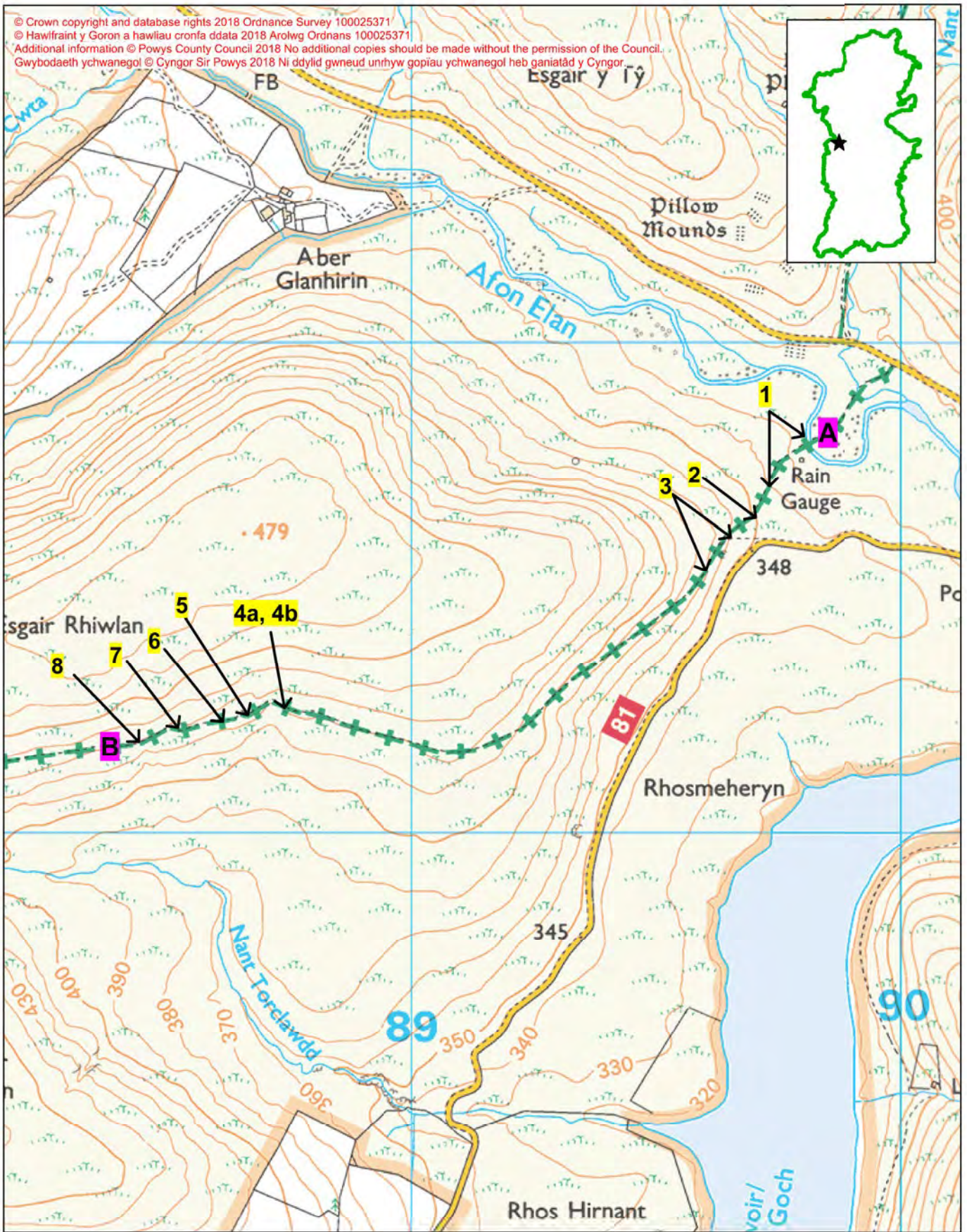








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**APPENDIX II:**





**Plate 1** Work being conducted in area 1 (east end of scheme). View south-west.



**Plate 2** View north of large rut mark found in area 1 (eastern end of scheme)



**Plate 3** View south-west of work completed within area 1 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 4** View east of drainage grip being installed within area 2 (eastern area of scheme)





**Plate 5** View south-west of probable original Monks Trod route way to the right of the existing route, area 3 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 6** View north-east of groundworks completed within area 3 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 7** View east of drainage grip installed within area 4a (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 8** View south-east of drainage grip installed within area 4b (eastern area of scheme)





**Plate 9** View west of drainage grip installed within area 5 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 10** View south of drainage grip installed within area 6 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 11** View south of drainage grip installed within area 7 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 12** View south of drainage grip installed within area 8 (eastern area of scheme)





**Plate 13** View east back along route way near to drainage grip 7 (eastern area of scheme)



**Plate 14** Pre ex view southwest, north east end of area 1 (western area of scheme)



**Plate 15** Working view north-east of area 1, south-west end start point (western area of scheme)



**Plate 16** View south-east of stone kerbs **011**, area 1 (western area of scheme)





**Plate 17** View south-east of stone kerbs 012, area 1 (western area of scheme)



**Plate 18** South-east facing section of re-graded route way in area 1 (western area of scheme)





**Plate 19** View north-east of re-grading works completed in area 1(western area of scheme)



**Plate 20** View south-west of re-grading works completed in area 1(western area of scheme)





**Plate 21** Displaced kerb stone found during area 1 works (western area of scheme)



**Plate 22** Registration plate found in wheel rut 009 during area 1 groundworks (western area of scheme)



**Plate 23** View south-west of area 3a after removal of large central high standing rut (western area of scheme)



**Plate 24** View south-west of area 3a which contains preserved paved surface and kerbing(western area of scheme)





**Plate 25** View south of small grip installed within area 5 (western area of scheme)



**Plate 26** Paved surface just west of grip 5, view south (western area of scheme)





**Plate 27** View south of drainage grip installed within area 6 (western area of scheme)



**Plate 28** View south-east of drainage grip installed within area 7 (western area of scheme)





**Plate 29** Paved surface and kerbstones, found to the immediate west of area 7 (western area of scheme)



**Plate 30** Detail of kerbstone found to the immediate west of area 7 (western area of scheme)





**Plate 31** View south-west of drainage grip installed within area 8 (western area of scheme)



**Plate 32** Paved/cobbled surface and kerbstones, found to the immediate west of area 8 (western area of scheme)

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**APPENDIX III:**

## Appendix 1 – Context List

Context	Description		Relationship
001	Deposit	Light grey dark brown silty clay topsoil (peat forming deposit) (Eastern area of scheme)	Overlies 002
002	Deposit	Light to mid grey clay natural (Eastern area of scheme)	Underlies 002
003	Deposit	Light orange yellow clay (Eastern area of scheme)	Underlies 001 and 004
004	Deposit	Black brown peat topsoil (western area of scheme)	Overlies 004
005	Deposit	Dark brown waterlogged peat (western area of scheme)	Overlies 006
006	Deposit	Mid grey clay (Western area of scheme, found at work areas 5 through to 10)	Underlies 005
007	Deposit	Dark brown organic peat (western area of scheme, area 1)	Overlies 008
008	Deposit	Firmly compacted yellow grey clay natural(western area of scheme, area 1)	Underlies 007
009	Cut	Modern rutting (western area of scheme, area 1)	Cuts 008
010	Deposit	Peat fill of modern rutting (western area of scheme, area 1)	Fill of 009
011	Structure	Remains of probable Kerbing (western area of scheme, area 1)	Underlies 007
012	Structure	Remains of probable Kerbing (western area of scheme, area 1)	Underlies 007

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**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

**FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT MONKS TROD, RHAYADER (POWYS)**

**Prepared for:**

**Powys County Council**

**Project No: 2597**

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2018**



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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<i>Summary</i> .....	3
<b>1. Introduction and planning background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Site Description</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Archaeological background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Objectives</b> .....	<b>4</b>
4.1. Site Specific Research Aims .....	5
<b>5. Timetable of works</b> .....	<b>5</b>
5.1. Fieldwork .....	5
5.2. Report delivery .....	6
<b>6. Fieldwork</b> .....	<b>6</b>
6.1. Detail .....	6
6.2. Recording.....	7
6.3. Finds.....	8
6.4. Environmental sampling strategy .....	8
6.5. Human remains .....	8
6.6. Specialist advisers.....	9
<b>7. Monitoring</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>8. Post-fieldwork programme</b> .....	<b>10</b>
8.1. Archive assessment .....	10
8.2. Reports and archive deposition .....	11
<b>9. Staff</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Additional Considerations</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>10. Health and Safety</b> .....	<b>12</b>
10.1. Risk assessment .....	12
10.2. Other guidelines .....	12
<b>11. Community Engagement and Outreach</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>12. Insurance</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>13. Quality Control</b> .....	<b>13</b>
13.1. Professional standards .....	13
13.2. Project tracking .....	13
<b>14. Arbitration</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>15. References</b> .....	<b>14</b>

Figure 1. Locations of LC296 byway works. Elan Valley, Rhayader (Powys).

Figure 2. Detail of proposed works – east.

Figure 3. Detail of proposed works – west.



### *Summary*

*This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) details a programme of archaeological watching brief to be undertaken by Archaeology Wales at the request of Powys County Council.*

*The work will consist of an archaeological watching brief and will be undertaken during ground works associated with LC296 surface works Ellan Valley, Rhayader, Powys (SN 89119 71154 – SN 84049 68894).*

*The works fall within the Monk's Trod (PRNs 53025; 56127-8; 64129); a routeway used by monks of the Cistercian abbeys connecting Cwmhir (PRN245) and Strata Florida. The section belonging to Pont ar Elan beside Craig Goch Dam reservoir and Strata Florida crosses over natural peat moorland and it is designated as a National Nature Reserve Claerwen (NNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (Elenydd SSSI), and Special Protection Area (Elenydd-Mallaen).*

*All work will be undertaken in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).*

## **1. Introduction and planning background**

This WSI details the methodology for a watching brief to be undertaken during all intrusive works associated with LC296 surface works Ellan Valley, Rhayader, Powys (SN 89119 71154 – SN 84049 68894).

The Monk's Trod is a routeway used by monks of the Cistercian abbeys connecting Cwmhir and Strata Florida. The section belonging to Pont ar Elan beside Craig Goch Dam reservoir and Strata Florida crosses over natural peat moorland and it is designated as a National Nature Reserve Claerwen (NNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (Elenydd SSSI), and Special Protection Area (Elenydd-Mallaen).

This WSI has been prepared by Dr Irene Garcia Rovira, Project Manager, Archaeology Wales Ltd (henceforth - AW) at the request of Powys County Council.

The methodology set out in this WSI has been agreed with Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust – Development Control (CPAT-DC) in its capacity as archaeological advisors to Powys County Council. CPAT-DC has recommended that a watching brief of all intrusive groundworks is carried out to mitigate the impact of the proposed surface improvements on the archaeological resource.

The purpose of the archaeological mitigation is to provide the local planning authority with sufficient information regarding the nature of archaeological remains on the site of the development, the requirements for which are set out in Planning Policy (revised edition 9, 2016), Section 6.5 and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 24: The Historic Environment (2017). The work is to ensure that all buried artefacts and

deposits are fully investigated and recorded if they are disturbed or revealed as a result of activities associated with the development.

All work will be undertaken to the standards and guidance set by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014). AW is a Registered Organisation with the CIfA.

## **2. Site Description**

The intrusive works will be focused on two specific areas of the Monk's Trod route. An area to the west (centred on SN 84049 68894), located SW of Pont ar Elan, stretching for c. 1.08km, and approximately 350m AOD; and an area to the east (centred on SN 89119 71154) falling within the Claerwen Natural Reservoir and stretching for 1.3km, and c. 400m AOD (see Figure 1, 2 and 3).

The underlying geology is composed of Llandovery rocks, including mudstone, siltstone and sandstone formed during the Silurian Period. The superficial deposits are of alluvial origin and are composed of clay, silt and sandstone, formed during the Quaternary period (BGS 2018).

## **3. Archaeological background**

The areas subjected to development form part of the Monks Trod, an ancient road located across the Cambrian mountains, from the Teifi Basin to the Wye Valley.

The road seems to have linked Abbey Cwmhir to Strata Florida. It runs west from Abbey Cwmhir, crossing Moel Hywel (from Cwm-hir Bank) and descending to St Harmon, before crossing the River Wye at Pont Marteg, and rising up towards Pont ar Elan. At this point it routes south-west, passing north of the western point of the Claerwen Reservoir, before passing the Teifi Pools and descending through Troed y Rhiw to Strata Florida. Some stretches of the road survive as a terraced road.

## **4. Objectives**

This WSI sets out a program of works to ensure that the watching brief will meet the standard required by The Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014).

The objective of the watching brief will be:

- to allow a rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features that are uncovered during the proposed groundworks within the application area.
- to provide the opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the

watching brief are not sufficient to support the treatment to a satisfactory or proper standard.

A written report will be compiled following the fieldwork. Sufficient desk-top research will be undertaken to ensure that the results of this work are properly understood, interpreted and reported.

The report will include a comprehensive assessment of the historic context within which the archaeological evidence rests and will aim to highlight any relevant research issues within regional, national and, if relevant, international research frameworks.

#### **4.1. Site Specific Research Aims**

It is important to recognize that whilst primarily designed to mitigate impacts, developer-led archaeology is also regarded as research activity with an academic basis, the aim of which is to add to the sum of human knowledge. Curators recognize the desirability of incorporating agreed research priorities as a means of enhancing the credibility of the development control process, ensuring cost-effectiveness and legitimately maximizing intellectual return.

A research framework for the archaeology of Wales has been produced (2011-2014) and currently in the process of review.

This watching brief has the capacity to identify areas which may contribute to the following published research aims:

- To provide with further understanding of the methods of construction used for the road.
- To provide with evidence predating medieval times preserved in the form of buried archaeological remains.

Broader themes are also to be addressed as follows:

- The extent, nature, economy and character of settlement and landscape use throughout time.

## **5. Timetable of works**

### **5.1. Fieldwork**

The watching brief will be undertaken during ground works associated with LC296 surface works Ellan Valley, Rhayader, Powys. The work will commence at the date that groundwork starts. Archaeology Wales will update CPAT-DC with the exact date.

## 5.2. Report delivery

The report will be submitted to Powys County Council and to CPAT-DC within three months of the completion of the fieldwork. A copy of the report will also be sent to the regional HER.

## 6. Fieldwork

### 6.1. Detail

The work will be undertaken to meet the standard required by The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs* (2014).

An archaeological watching brief will be undertaken during all intrusive ground works associated to LC296 surface works Ellan Valley, Rhayader, Powys. The location and details of the work undertaken are listed below:

LOCATION	ACTION
SN 8980 7181	From river bank for a distance of c.125 m (end approx. 20 m before waymark post on right hand side): re-grade surface to remove deep motorcycle ruts and create a level track 3m wide. Install stone surface cap of compacted crusher run.
SN 8970 7164	Install drainage grip to take water off byway.
SN 8965 7160	Re-grade surface to remove ruts – approx. length 80 m.
SN 8874 7125	Install grip to drain water off track. Install grip to remove water.
SN 8866 7124	Install grip to remove water if possible.
SN 8861 7122	Install grip to remove water.
SN 8852 7121	Install grip to remove water from track.
SN 8844 7118	Install grip if waterlogged.
SN 8322 6870 to SN 83266878	Re-grade surface, 2m width, to reinstate original line above eroded section of peat (approx. 90m long). Install approx. drainage pipe and/or grips as needed to take water off reinstated surface. Eroded peat section to be left untouched to fill naturally with water and enable peat regeneration.
SN 8326 6878	Re-grade surface to reinstate on original line. Leave damaged, bare peat section untouched.
SN 8330 6879 to SN 8336 6881	Section of large stones and boulders (approx. 60m): install grip(s) to remove water off track. Re-grade surface to reduce central rut, remove only large loose stones/cobbles from surface.

SN 8336 6881	Section of large stones and boulders: Remove large loose stones/cobbles to provide firm, level surface. Do not disturb large embedded rocks.
SN 8361 6882	Reinstate path on original line, leave bare peat area untouched.
SN 8341 6882	Install grip to take water off track if possible. Replace waymark post.
SN 8350 6882	Install grip to take water off track if possible.
SN 8414 6904	Install grip if possible to relieve water-filled ruts

The watching brief archaeologist will also monitor any movement of intact kerbstones and significant road make-up. This will be left intact if encountered. If well-preserved road is impacted, the watching brief archaeologist will record it in the form of a plan and a section across it.

The watching brief will be undertaken using a tracked 360 degree excavated equipped with a flat-bladed bucket, and will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist until the natural substrate has been reached.

The work will be undertaken to meet the standard required by The Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs* (2014).

The site archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will be afforded the required access by the main contractor in order to observe and where necessary to record any archaeological remains revealed. Groundwork will not be undertaken without the presence of the site archaeologist. The site archaeologist will record finds and less significant archaeological deposits and features without significant delay to the work program.

Where significant or complex archaeological deposits or features are encountered there will be a requirement for those areas to be fenced off and highlighted to all contractors employed on the site. Machines or contractors shall not enter this area until archaeological recording has been completed. If significant archaeological features are revealed during the work a meeting between Powys County Council, CPAT and AW will be called at the earliest convenience.

To comply with professional guidelines, a contingency for a maximum of three days' uninterrupted access to each such area and for a team of up to two further archaeologists to be employed should be provided. Contingency costs will be agreed in advance before any extension to the programme commences and will follow a site meeting between Archaeology Wales, Powys County council and CPAT.

## 6.2. Recording

Recording will be carried out using AW recording systems (pro-forma context sheets etc) using a continuous number sequence for all contexts.

Plans and sections will be drawn to a scale of 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 as required and related to Ordnance Survey datum and published boundaries where appropriate.

All features identified will be tied in to the OS survey grid and fixed to local topographical boundaries.

Photographs will be taken in digital format with an appropriate scale, using a 12MP camera with photographs stored in Tiff format.

The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will have access to the AW metal detector and be trained in its use.

### **6.3. Finds**

The professional standards set in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological (2014)* will form the basis of finds collection, processing and recording.

All manner of finds regardless of category and date will be retained.

Finds recovered that are regarded as Treasure under *The Treasure Act 1996* will be reported to HM Coroner for the local area.

Any finds which are considered to be in need of immediate conservation will be referred to a UKIC qualified conservator (normally Phil Parkes at Cardiff University).

### **6.4. Environmental sampling strategy**

Deposits with a significant potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental material will be sampled, by means of the most appropriate method (bulk, column etc). Where sampling will provide a significant contribution to the understanding of the site AW will draw up a site-specific sampling strategy alongside a specialist environmental archaeologist. All environmental sampling and recording and will follow English Heritage's *Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2011).

### **6.5. Human remains**

In the event that human remains are encountered, their nature and extent will be established and the coroner informed. All human remains will be left *in situ* and protected during backfilling. Where preservation *in situ* is not possible the human remains will be fully recorded and removed under conditions that comply with all current legislation and include acquisition of licenses and provision for reburial following all analytical work. Human remains will be excavated in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's *Excavation and Post-Excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains: Technical Paper Number 13* (1993).

A meeting with CPAT-DC, Powys County Council and AW will be called if the human remains uncovered are of such complexity or significance that the contingency arrangement (6.1 above) would not be of sufficient scope.

### 6.6. Specialist advisers

In the event of certain finds, features or sites being discovered, AW will seek specialist opinion and advice. A list of specialists is given in the table below although this list is not exhaustive.

Artefact type	Specialist
Flint	Kate Pitt (Archaeology Wales)
Animal bone	Richard Madgwick (Cardiff University)
CBM, heat affected clay, Daub etc.	Rachael Hall (APS)
Clay pipe	Hilary Major (Freelance)
Glass	Rowena Hart (Archaeology Wales)
Cremated and non-cremated human bone	Malin Holst (University of York)/Richard Madgwick (Cardiff University)
Metalwork	Kevin Leahy (University of Leicester)/Quita Mold (Freelance)
Metal work and metallurgical residues	Dr Tim Young (GeoArch)
Neo/BA pottery	Dr Alex Gibson (Bradford University)
IA/Roman pottery	Jane Timby (Freelance)
Roman Pottery	Rowena Hart (Archaeology Wales)/ Peter Webster (Freelance)
Post Roman pottery	Stephen Clarke (Monmouthshire Archaeology)
Charcoal (wood ID)	John Carrot (Freelance)
Waterlogged wood	Nigel Nayling (University of Wales – Lampeter)



Molluscs and pollen	Dr James Rackham
Charred waterlogged remains and plant	Wendy Carruthers (Freelance)

### 6.6.1. Specialist reports

Specialist finds and palaeoenvironmental reports will be written by AW specialists, or sub-contracted to external specialists when required.

## 7. Monitoring

CPAT-DC will be contacted approximately five days prior to the commencement of archaeological site works, and subsequently once the work is underway.

Any changes to the WSI that AW may wish to make after approval will be communicated to CPAT-DC for approval on behalf of Planning Authority.

Representatives of CPAT-DC will be given access to the site so that they may monitor the progress of the field evaluation. No area will be back-filled, until CPAT-DC has had the opportunity to inspect it, unless permission has been given in advance. CPAT-DC will be kept regularly informed about developments, both during the site works and subsequently during post-excavation.

## 8. Post-fieldwork programme

### 8.1. Archive assessment

#### 8.1.1. Site archive

An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared in accordance with: Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (Historic England 2006) upon completion of the project.

The site archive (including artefacts and samples) will be will be prepared in accordance with the National Monuments Record (Wales) agreed structure and deposited with an appropriate receiving organisation, in compliance with CIfA Guidelines (*Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, 2014). The legal landowners consent will be gained for deposition of finds.

#### 8.1.2. Analysis

Following a rapid review of the potential of the site archive, a programme of analysis and reporting will be undertaken. This will result in the following inclusions in the final report:

- Non-technical summary
- Location plan showing the area/s covered by the watching brief, all artefacts, structures and features found
- Plan and section drawings (if features are encountered) with ground level, ordnance datum and vertical and horizontal scales.
- Written description and interpretation of all deposits identified, including their character, function, potential dating and relationship to adjacent features. Specialist descriptions and illustrations of all artefacts and soil samples will be included as appropriate.
- An indication of the potential of archaeological deposits which have not been disturbed by the development
- A discussion of the local, regional and national context of the remains by means of reviewing published reports, unpublished reports, historical maps, documents from local archives and the regional HER as appropriate.
- A detailed archive list at the rear listing all contexts recorded, all samples finds and find types, drawings and photographs taken. This will include a statement of the intent to deposit, and location of deposition, of the archive.

## **8.2. Reports and archive deposition**

### **8.2.1. Report to client**

Copies of all reports associated with the watching brief, together with inclusion of supporting evidence in appendices as appropriate, including photographs and illustrations, will be submitted to Powys County Council and CPAT-DC upon completion.

### **8.2.2. Additional reports**

After an appropriate period has elapsed, copies of all reports will be deposited with the relevant county Historical Environment Record, the National Monuments Record and, if appropriate, Cadw.

### **8.2.3. Summary reports for publication**

Short archaeological reports will be submitted for publication in relevant journals; as a minimum, a report will be submitted to the annual publication of the regional CBA group or equivalent journal.

### **8.2.4. Notification of important remains**

Where it is considered that remains have been revealed that may satisfy the criteria for statutory protection, AW will submit preliminary notification of the remains to Cadw.

### **8.2.5. Archive deposition**

The final archive (site and research) will, whenever appropriate, be deposited with a suitable receiving institution, usually the relevant Local Authority museums service. Arrangements will be made with the receiving institution before work starts.

Although there may be a period during which client confidentiality will need to be maintained, copies of all reports and the final archive will be deposited no later than six months after completion of the work.

Copies of all reports, the digital archive and an archive index will be deposited with the *National Monuments Record*, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth.

Wherever the archive is deposited, this information will be relayed to the HER. A summary of the contents of the archive will be supplied to CPAT-DC.

### **8.2.6. Finds deposition**

The finds, including artefacts and ecofacts, excepting those which may be subject to the Treasure Act, will be deposited with the same institution, subject to the agreement of the legal land owners.

## **9. Staff**

The project will be managed by Dr Irene Garcia Rovira (AW Assistant Project Manager) and the fieldwork undertaken by Andrew Shobbroock (Archaeology Wales). Any alteration to staffing before or during the work will be brought to the attention of CPAT-DC and Powys County Council.

## **Additional Considerations**

### **10. Health and Safety**

#### **10.1. Risk assessment**

Prior to the commencement of work AW will carry out and produce a formal Health and Safety Risk Assessment in accordance with *The Management of Health and Safety Regulations* 1992. A copy of the risk assessment will be kept on site and be available for inspection on request. A copy will be sent to the client (or their agent as necessary) for their information. All members of AW staff will adhere to the content of this document.

#### **10.2. Other guidelines**

AW will adhere to best practice with regard to Health and Safety in Archaeology as set out in the FAME (Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers) health and safety manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (2002).



## **11. Community Engagement and Outreach**

Wherever possible, AW will ensure suitable measures are in place to inform the local community and any interested parties of the results of the site investigation work. This may occur during the site investigation work or following completion of the work. The form of any potential outreach activities may include lectures and talks to local groups, interested parties and persons, information boards, flyers and other forms of communication (social media and websites), and press releases to local and national media.

The form of any outreach will respect client confidentiality or contractual agreements. As a rule, outreach will be proportional to the size of the project.

Where outreach activities have a cost implication these will need to be negotiated in advance and in accordance with the nature of the desired response and learning outcomes.

## **12. Insurance**

AW is fully insured for this type of work, and holds Insurance with Aviva Insurance Ltd and Hiscox Insurance Company Limited through Towergate Insurance. Full details of these and other relevant policies can be supplied on request.

## **13. Quality Control**

### **13.1. Professional standards**

AW works to the standards and guidance provided by the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*. AW fully recognise and endorse the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*, *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* and the *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* currently in force. All employees of AW, whether corporate members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists or not, are expected to adhere to these Codes and Standards during their employment.

### **13.2. Project tracking**

The designated AW manager will monitor all projects in order to ensure that agreed targets are met without reduction in quality of service.

## **14. Arbitration**

Disputes or differences arising in relation to this work shall be referred for a decision in accordance with the Rules of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators' *Arbitration Scheme for the Institute for Archaeologists* applying at the date of the agreement.

## 15. References

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. Standards and guidance for the collection, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. Standards and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.

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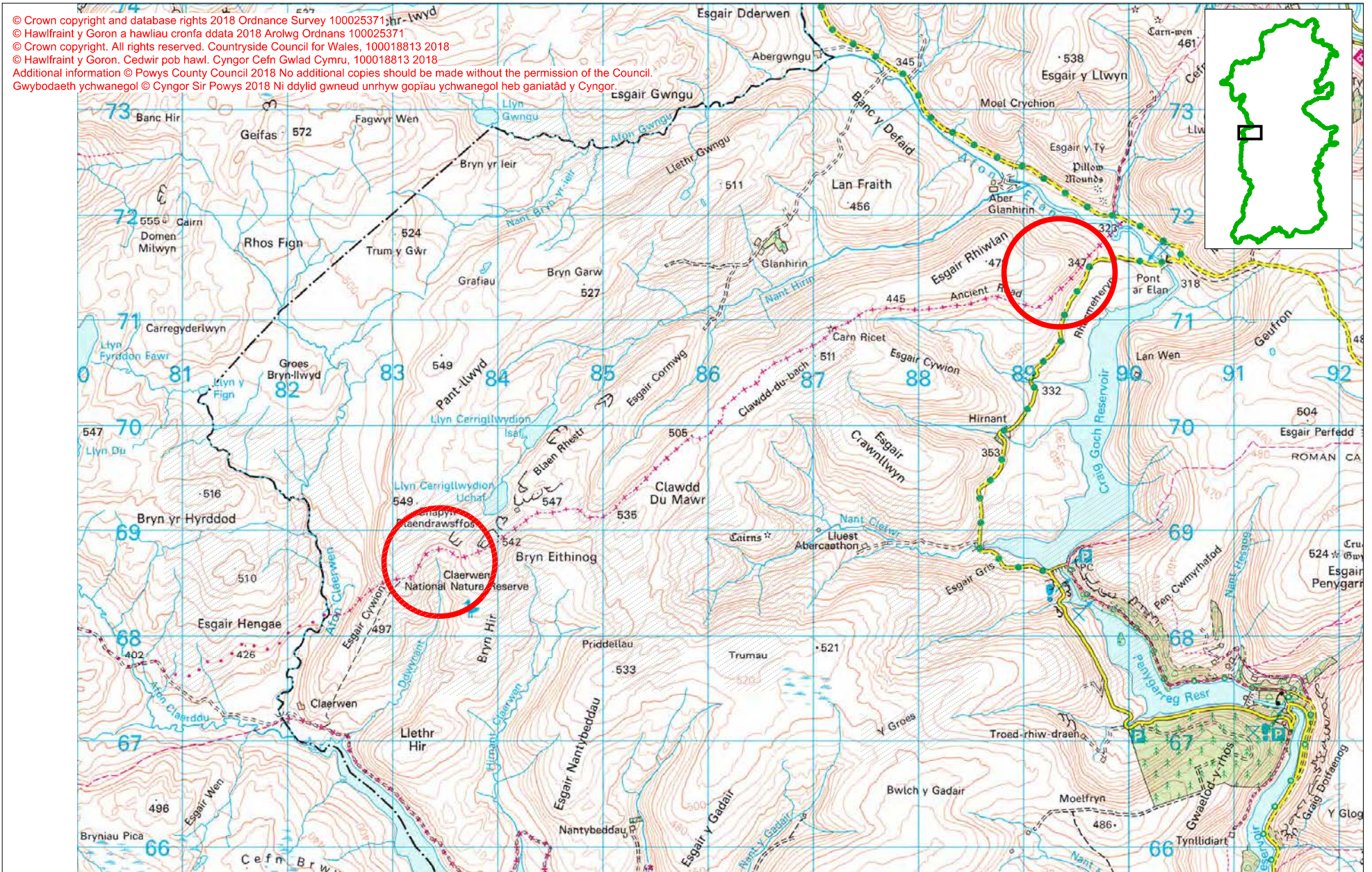
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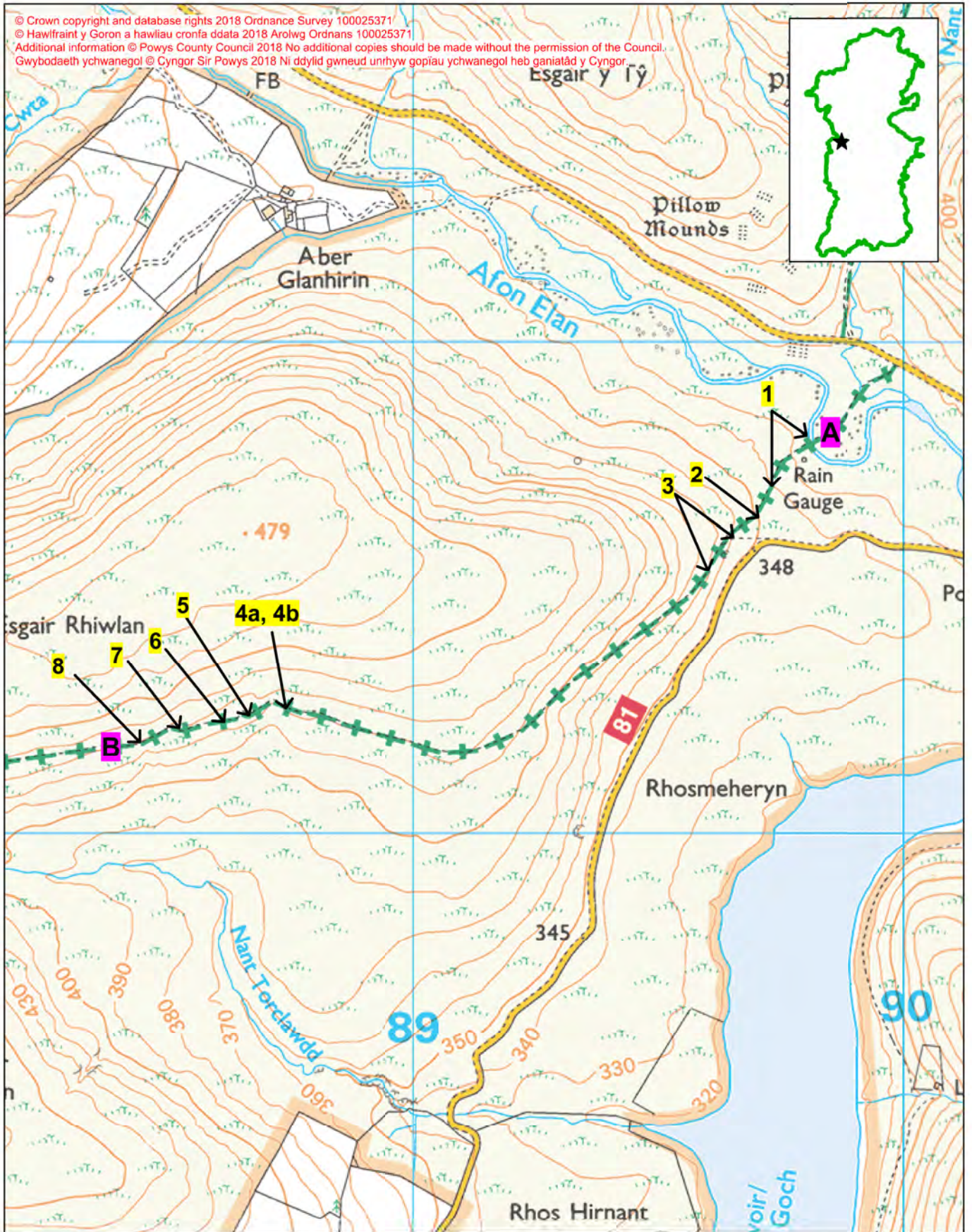
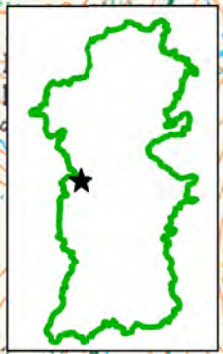


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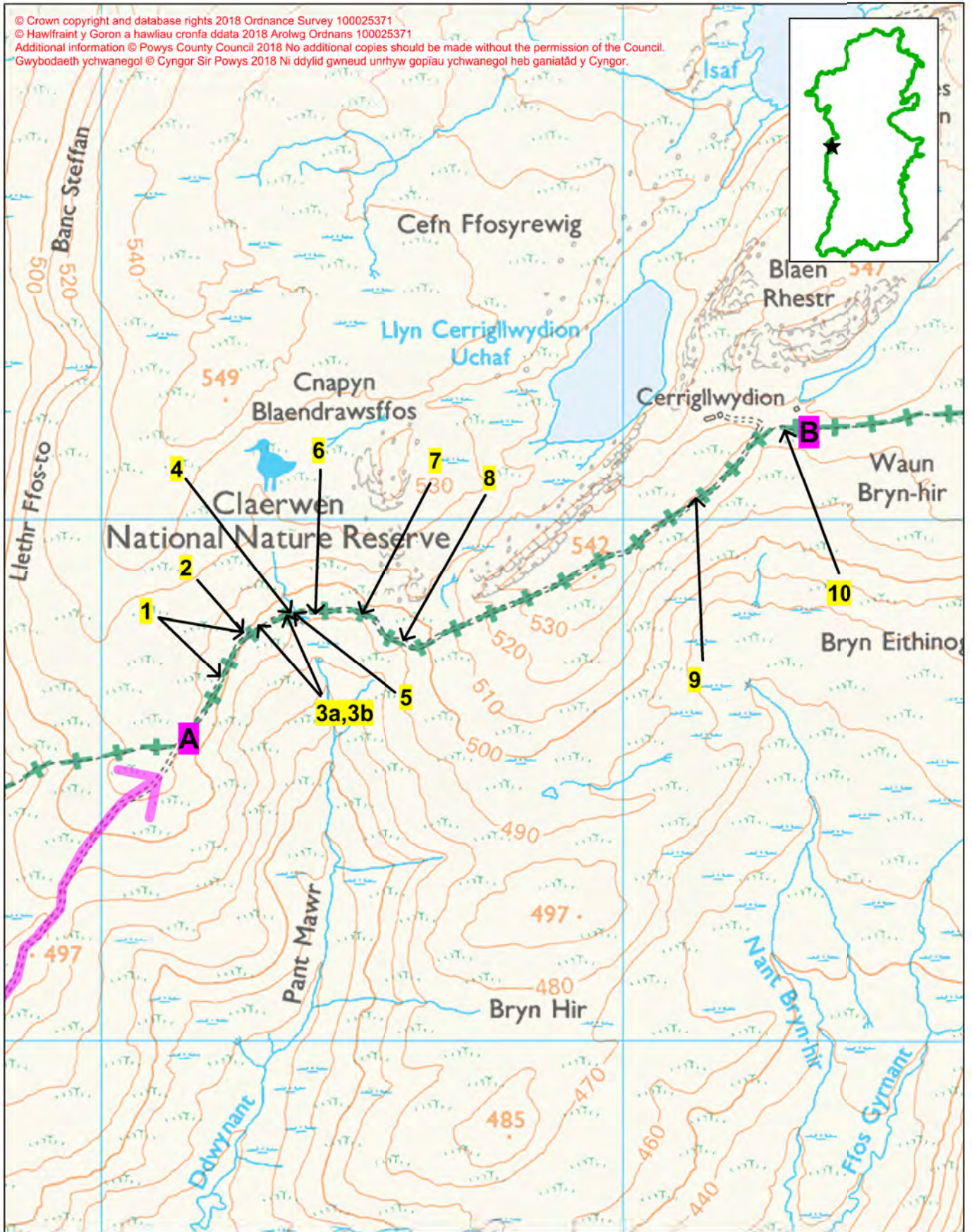




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