

**CPAT Report No 1212**

# Caerau Roman Vicus, Beulah, Powys

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS 2013**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



**THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

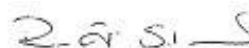
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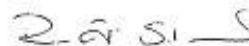
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Cover photo: Excavations on the linear earthwork running north-east from the fort (CPAT 3709-0003)

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In June and October 2013 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out further investigations in the environs of the Roman fort at Caerau, near Beulah, Powys. The work was designed to determine the extent and identify some of the elements of the *vicus* around the fort, by means of excavation and geophysics, and formed part of the on-going programme of work on Roman military sites in eastern Wales that is enhancing the management and protection of these important monuments. Financial assistance was granted by Cadw.
- 1.2 The work herein described utilised similar methods to those employed in the investigation of the *vici* at Brecon Gaer in 2009 and 2010 (Hankinson 2009; 2010), Hindwell in 2011 (Hankinson 2011a) and Castell Collen in 2011 (Hankinson 2011b). The results from trial excavations at Caerau in 2012 (Hankinson 2012) suggested that there were areas around the fort where geophysics additional to that carried out around the fort in 2004 (Silvester, Hopewell and Grant 2005) could potentially add to the known picture of the settlement. The geophysics therefore formed the first phase of the investigations and examined land to both the north of the known vicus and to the north-east of the fort, the latter being an area where evidence of Roman activity had been revealed by test pits in 2012.
- 1.3 This second phase of investigations involved the excavation of further small-scale test pits, placed around the fort and its known *vicus* in areas not examined in 2012, and included an excavated section across a linear earthwork which runs north-east from the fort. This then built on the work of the previous year, providing a more comprehensive picture of the extra-mural activity around Caerau Fort.

## 2 THE FORT AND ITS ENVIRONS

- 2.1 The Roman fort at Caerau (SN 9239 5016) lies about half way between the forts at Llandovery and Castell Collen and around 1km south-east of Beulah in south-west Powys. It lies on a low hill immediately adjacent to the Roman road (RR623a) and overlooks the Afon Cammarch, a tributary stream of the Afon Irfon, to the north-east. The fort lies at an elevation of approximately 220m OD, about 30m above the adjacent river level; it has clear views towards Mynydd Epynt to the south and south-east, with rather more restricted views to the hills on the west and north. The locality is one of rolling topography, covering a strip of land about 6km in overall width sandwiched between the ranges of Mynydd Epynt to the east and the Cambrian Mountains to the west, both of which exceed 450m OD in elevation.
- 2.2 The fort was only conclusively recognised as late as the 1950s through the work of the late Barri Jones (Jones 1957, 126), although it is perhaps surprising that it was missed by the Ordnance Survey in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially as there was apparently a local tradition that this was the site of a Roman camp (Jones 1923, 156). Additionally, there were references to Roman ceramic material being found here before the 1950s, firstly during drainage work at the farm in the late 1870s (Banks 1879, 151) and again in 1914, as a result of ploughing (Jones 1923, 156). The latter reference mentions that ‘many cartloads of pieces of earthenware vessels, of varying sizes and thickness were turned up’ when a field called ‘Cae Pen y Bont’ was first ploughed; examination of the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Tithe map shows that this was the field which runs down to Black Bridge on the Afon Cammarch, to the north-east of the farm. The place where the ceramics were found was described by Jones (1923, 156) as a ‘small flat area’ of the field and he commented that ‘pieces of concrete’ were found at the site in 1914, which he supposed to have been the floor of a factory, although it might be more realistic to consider this evidence as indicative of a bath-house. The medieval castle mound known as ‘Twadin’ was first recorded here by Jones (1805-9, 267), and its presence on the south-western part of the Roman defences seems to

have either diverted attention away from the possibility that this was the site of a Roman fort or to have at least introduced a level of doubt about the site as a whole. This is typified by Banks (1879, 151), who, while discussing the mound, mentions that ‘from the discovery of rubbish and ruins, and from the place being called the encampments, some have concluded that it was a Roman station’.

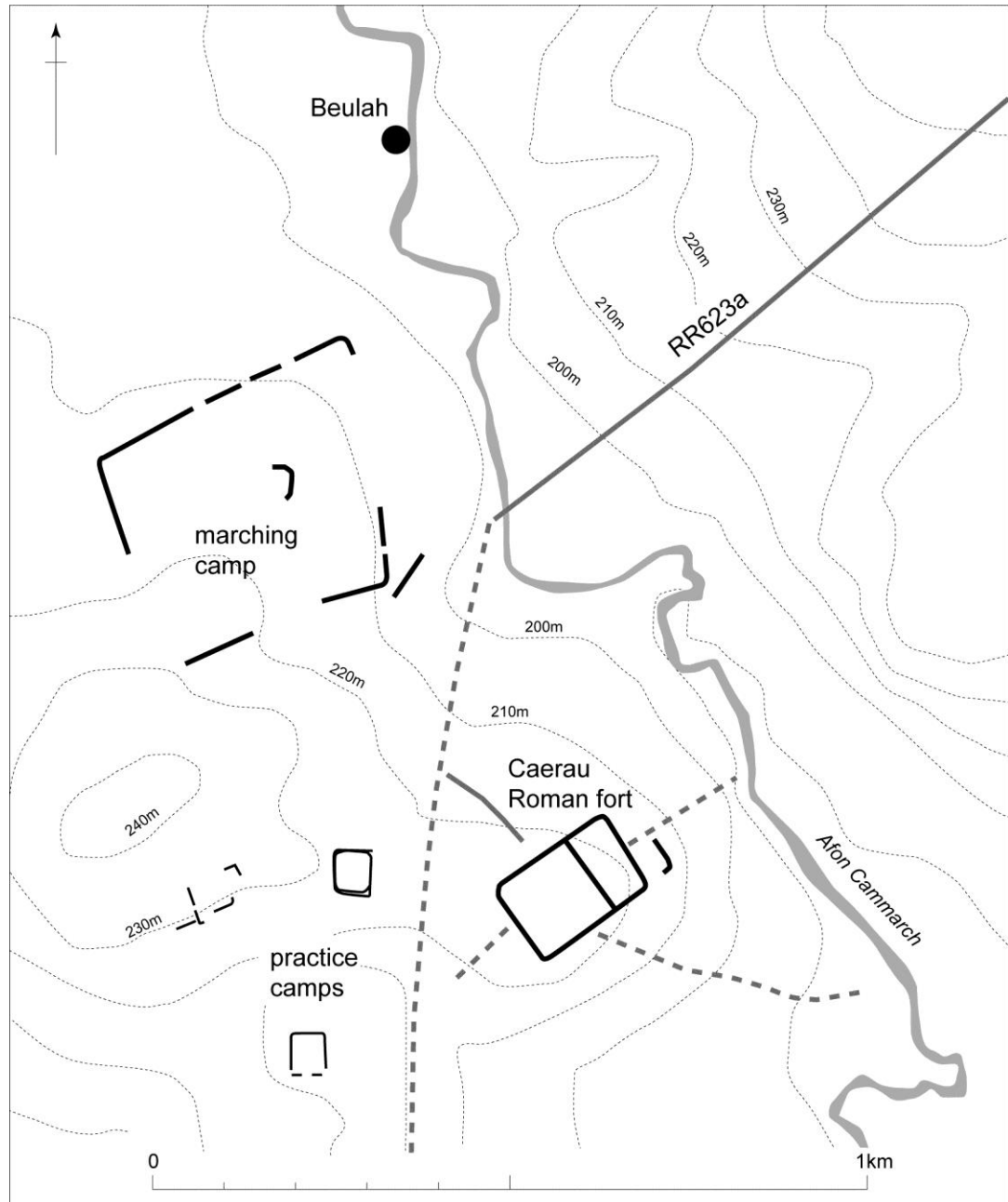
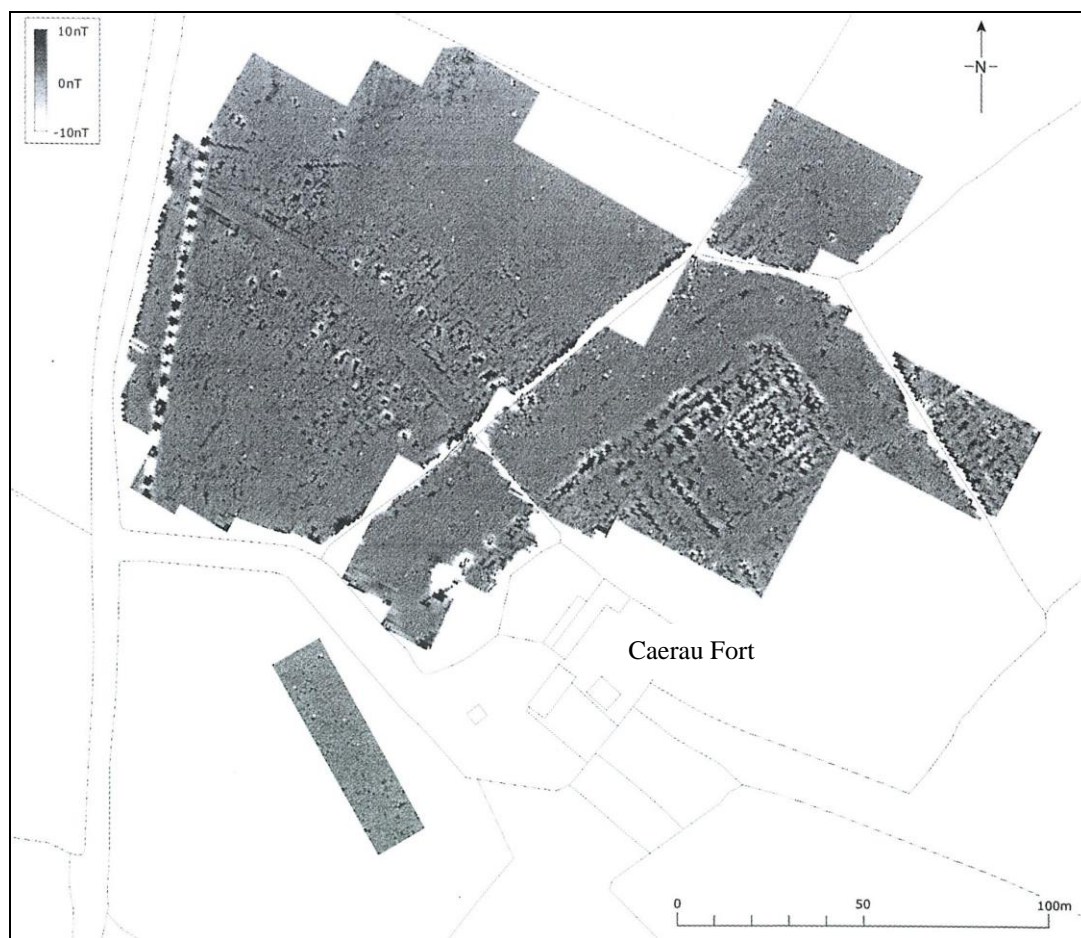


Fig. 1: The location of Caerau fort in relation to other Roman sites in the vicinity and the modern settlement of Beulah

- 2.3 The fort has been described in some detail in Burnham and Davies (2010) and much of the following summary is drawn from that source. It was first surveyed in 1958 (Jones and Thomson 1958) and trial excavations took place in 1965 identifying two phases of construction. In both phases the fort was slightly trapezoidal, the earlier measuring *c.* 167m by 117m on the west and 110m on the east, (1.9 hectares), the second measuring *c.* 106m on the north side, 113m on the south, 117m on the west and 115m on the east (1.3 hectares). The 1965 excavations investigated the north-western defences, demonstrating that the

- earlier fort rampart was built of clay with a turf front resting on a cobble foundation, the rampart being fronted by two ditches. The defences of the second fort were of similar construction, although the two ditches were infilled and replaced with a single ditch. Only limited excavations were undertaken in the interior, identifying part of a phase 1 timber building which was later replaced by a stone-built granary. Finds suggested that the site was occupied *c.*AD 75-120, with abandonment early in the reign of Hadrian. The date of the reduction in size could not be determined on the basis of the 1965 finds but a Trajanic date seemed appropriate.
- 2.4 The *vicus* to the north-west of the fort was initially recognised in 1958, when two small, semi-circular terraces were noted, together with marks that were claimed to represent the foundations of four rectangular buildings. Pottery, brick, tile and other material were scattered by the plough. The linear earthwork examined this year (see Section 6) was then thought to be an embankment or causeway rather than a road, though its purpose remained obscure; its alignment was noted as being similar to that of the fort, running for *c.*140m on ground sloping down to the Afon Cammarch. A split-level shelf on a terrace above the river was noted as having building material on it, while a quarry on the far side of the road (the minor road to Llangammarch) running 100m west of the fort was also claimed as a source of stone for the fort and its *vicus*, but this appears to be no more than supposition. A prominent ledge in front of the north-east gate was considered to be the site of the bath-house, although this interpretation is perhaps questionable.
- 2.5 Small-scale trial excavations and a ground survey were conducted by CPAT in 1990 within the area of the *vicus* in response to an application for scheduled monument consent to rotavate the field (Jones 1990). Fourteen test pits, each 1m square, were positioned either to investigate obvious earthwork features, or to provide data on the depth of archaeological deposits within the field as a whole. The ploughsoil varied in thickness between 0.2m and 0.3m, except where it overlay the Roman road, which was covered by only 0.15m of ploughsoil. Two test pits were positioned along the Roman road, both revealing a solid metalled surface composed of compacted fine gravel. Pottery and/or brick and tile fragments were recorded in ten of the test pits, including the rim of a mortaria which had been stamped DOCI, representing the name Doccius or Docilis, who was one of the most important potters working at Wroxeter in the period AD 100-150 (identification by Kay Hartley).
- 2.6 The 1990 ground survey identified the Roman road heading north-west from the fort, as well as a number of other, potentially Roman, earthworks and several linear features which were assumed to be modern field drains. A large platform was identified to the north-east of the road, cutting into the slope and measuring around 40m by 35m. Two of the three test pits located within the area of the platform produced evidence for occupation in the form of a compacted surface, possibly a floor, and fragments of brick and tile. Previous plans of the site (Jones and Thomson 1958; RCAHMW 1986, 131) had identified the positions of presumed buildings within the field, although, with the exception of the large platform, the survey was unable to confirm their presence.
- 2.7 Geophysical survey in 2004 (see Fig. 2, below) confirmed the presence of *vicus* settlement to the north-west of the fort, demonstrating a regular layout of buildings on either side of the Roman road, although no clear plan could be deduced. The positions of the buildings were suggested by thermo-remnant anomalies probably representing hearths. Evidence for rectangular buildings was also forthcoming outside the north-east rampart of the fort, although an adjacent earthwork bank suggests the possibility that this was a small annexe to the fort, rather than part of the *vicus*. Unfortunately, the remainder of the field to the north-east was not surveyed so it was not determined whether activity extended further on this side. The geophysical survey also failed to identify any evidence for extra-mural activity in a sample area examined to the south-west of the fort.



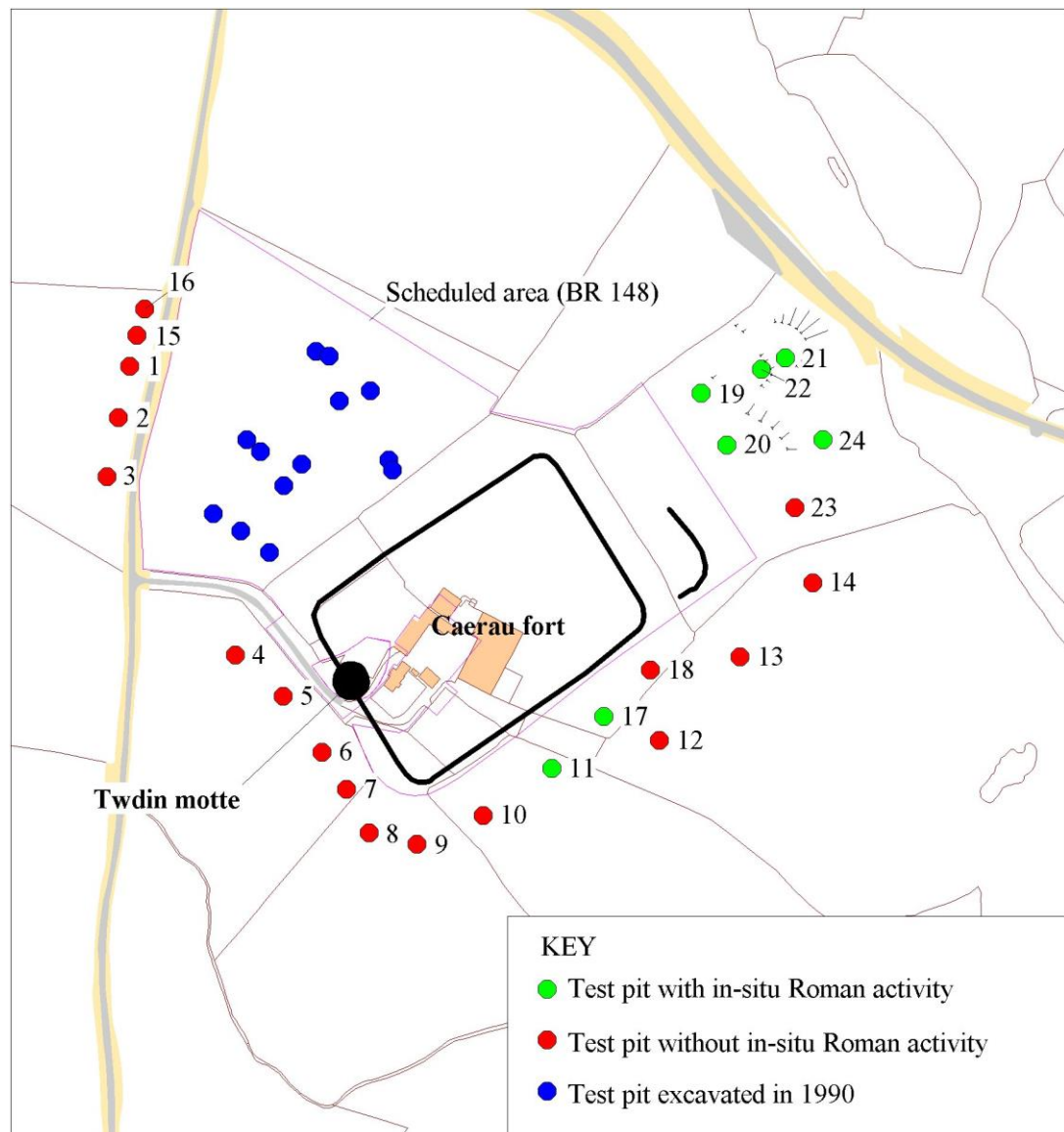


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Fig. 2: The results of the 2004 geophysics

- 2.8 An examination of LiDAR data has identified a trackway leading eastward from the presumed position of the south-east gate of the fort; this may or may not be of Roman date. The line of roads heading north-east and south-west from the fort may have been adopted by footpaths, depicted on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition mapping of 1889.
- 2.9 The area around Caerau also contains a number of earthworks and cropmarks which are likely to relate to Roman activity during the conquest period (Fig 1). A large marching camp and other potentially military earthworks lie 500m to the north-west, while two possible practice camps have been identified 200m to the west and 320m to the south-west, respectively (Davies and Jones 2006, 91-2); cropmarks further to the west suggest one, or perhaps two, further camps.
- 2.10 The series of small-scale test pits excavated around the fort and known *vicus* in 2012 added to the definition of extra-mural activity around the fort. No evidence for activity was revealed beyond the known *vicus* to the north-west and the situation was the same to the south-west of the fort. Activity contemporary with the fort was revealed on its south-east side, but this was in close proximity to the fort gate, and there was no conclusive evidence of settlement there. The topography elsewhere on this side is steeply-sloping and unsuitable for settlement. The area to the north-east of fort was more interesting, though investigations were largely restricted to the field which runs down to Black Bridge on the Afon Cammarch. There is no doubt that this is the field called 'Cae Pen y Bont' (see para 2.2), from which Roman finds were recovered in 1914, and plentiful evidence of Roman activity was revealed there; the results implied that this was probably limited to a restricted zone

flanking the road that exited the fort in this direction. Two significant places were identified, a platformed area where it seemed that there was evidence for its utilisation by buildings in the Roman period, and secondly a probable Roman ditch towards the lower (north-east) end of the field, which might indicate the presence of an annexe to the fort.



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Fig. 3: Location of the test pits from 2012 showing positive and negative evidence of Roman activity

### 3 THE 2013 INVESTIGATIONS

3.1 The primary aim of the investigations in 2013 was further to assess the extent of any potential *vicus* activity in the areas around the fort that had not already been examined. This followed previous methodology utilised at *vici* in east Wales, to define the limits of Roman activity with minimal impact on the archaeological resource and specifically without recourse to large-scale area excavation.



- 3.2 The fort and *vicus* are included within a scheduled area (SAM BR 148), which defines the extent of the Roman activity known at the start of the work in 2012. In that year, 24 test pits were cut at intervals across the ground surrounding the scheduled area, in order to identify the presence or absence of layers and/or features of Roman origin and therefore conclusively determine the extent of Roman occupation (see Section 2).
- 3.3 In 2013, three approaches were adopted. The initial work involved a limited programme of geophysics in two areas to the north and north-east of the fort, and this was followed by further test pit excavations in areas not already examined. The third element involved the excavation of a linear earthwork which has been suggested as having a Roman origin (see para 2.4), but whose nature and dating remained to be confirmed.
- 3.4 The geophysical survey was based on a series of 20m by 20m grids and employed a Bartington 601 fluxgate gradiometer. The readings in each grid were taken along traverses 0.5m apart and the speed of each traverse was carefully controlled such that readings were taken every 0.25m, giving a total of 3200 readings per 20m grid. The grids were laid out by taped measurement and then located in relation to local field boundaries by total station survey. The survey areas could then be related to modern Ordnance Survey mapping, thereby enabling the co-ordinates of any significant anomalies to be determined and the results compared to those from 2004 and to the test pit excavations. The readings from each area were combined and processed using Archeosurveyor software to provide greyscale images of the results. The main processing functions used were *Destripe* to remove variations in the readings between opposing traverses and *Clip*, to remove the effects of very high and very low readings on the results, thereby allowing anomalies of potential archaeological interest to be observed.
- 3.5 The positions for the test pits were chosen to provide as even a distribution as possible (Fig. 8), although the nature of the local topography and the presence of surface features of potential relevance were taken into account. Each test pit was between 1.0m and 1.2m square, and in each the modern soil layer(s) were removed by hand down to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural subsoil if no archaeological horizon was identified. The resulting surface was cleaned and examined to assess its potential and, if necessary, a small amount of investigation was then carried out to elucidate any features or deposits that were present, within the overall design of minimising the impact on their integrity. Any material which might assist in the subsequent dating of these features was recovered, where appropriate.
- 3.6 The excavation of the linear earthwork (see paragraph 2.4) involved a trench just over 10m in length and 1.5m in width across its course. Material recovered from the excavation was retained for further study and its potential use in dating the activity signified by the earthwork. The trench was restricted by a modern drain at its north-west end, so augering was used to provide further information on the relative depths and extents of the layers and features encountered.
- 3.7 All investigations were located by total station survey, thus establishing their precise position in relation to previous work at the site and the local field boundaries. Ten-figure national grid references for the locations have been created from the survey data.
- 3.8 As noted previously, the understanding of any features revealed in small test pits will always be limited, as the restricted view of the features makes interpretation problematical. Some of the interpretations given in Section 7 of this report must therefore necessarily be provisional. It should also be emphasised that the primary aim of the work has been to define the extent of Roman settlement, and, in this regard, negative evidence is equally valid.

## 4 GEOPHYSICS

- 4.1 The methodology for the geophysics is given in para 3.4. Two areas were examined, the first (Area 1) on the north-east side of the fort, extending the work done in 2004 which revealed magnetic anomalies on a terraced area at the top of the field running down to the Afon Cammarch. Most of this field was examined in 2013, with the exception of its fringes and some steeper ground adjacent to the river. The second (Area 2) was in the field to the north of that occupied by the known *vicus* and bordered areas examined by geophysics in 2004. Each individual or collective anomaly has been ascribed a number, is described below, and is depicted on Figs 6-9.

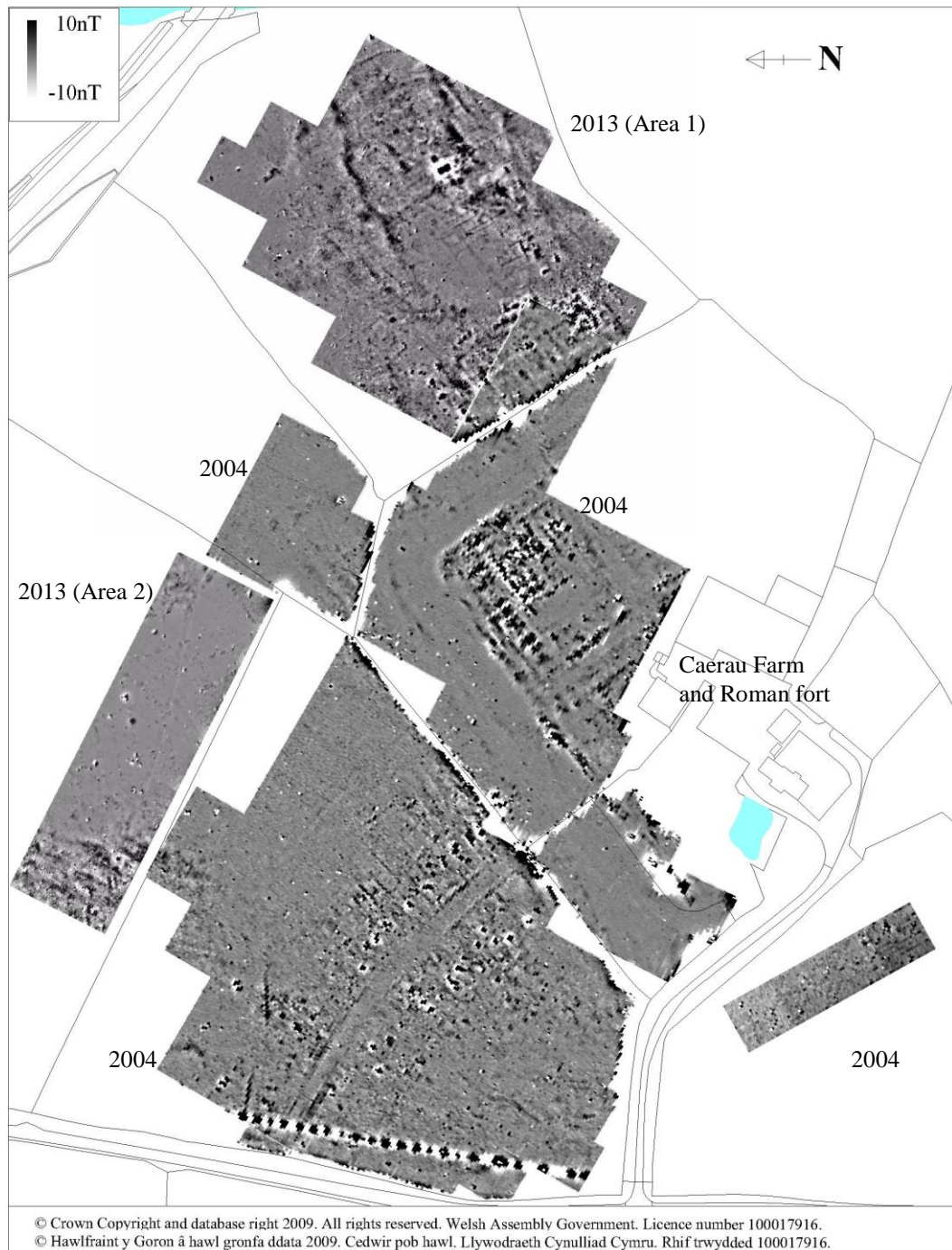


Fig. 4: Combined results for the geophysics carried out in 2004 and 2013. Note that the division between the surveys of 2004 and 2013 in the field to the north-east of the fort can be seen as a thin white line.

#### 4.2 Area 1

4.2.1 The results of the geophysics are depicted as a greyscale image on Fig. 5, below, with an interpretation of the results presented as Fig.6.



Fig. 5: The geophysics results in Area 1

4.2.2 At the lower (north-east) end of the field, a number of linear anomalies were encountered. Of these, anomaly 1 seemed to represent a ditch, perhaps 1.0m wide, which ran for a distance of at least 25m and extended beyond the limits of the survey area. Anomaly 2 was an infilled ditch or gully, aligned east-north-east/west-south-west and at least 80m long, its meandering nature hinting at something more likely to be of natural origin, perhaps representing the course of a rivulet issuing from a former spring. Test pit 20 in 2012 lay on the edge of anomaly 2 and the deposits revealed were of greater depth there than elsewhere in the field, with a redeposited silt containing abraded Roman material forming the lowest artificial deposit and probably representing the fill/silting that was observed in the geophysics. Anomaly 3 probably also represented a ditch which was identified in a test pit

(No 24) in 2012; this was probably of Roman date, ran at least 28m north-west and 25m south-west from a corner at NGR SN 92600 50263 and was perhaps about 2.0m in width.

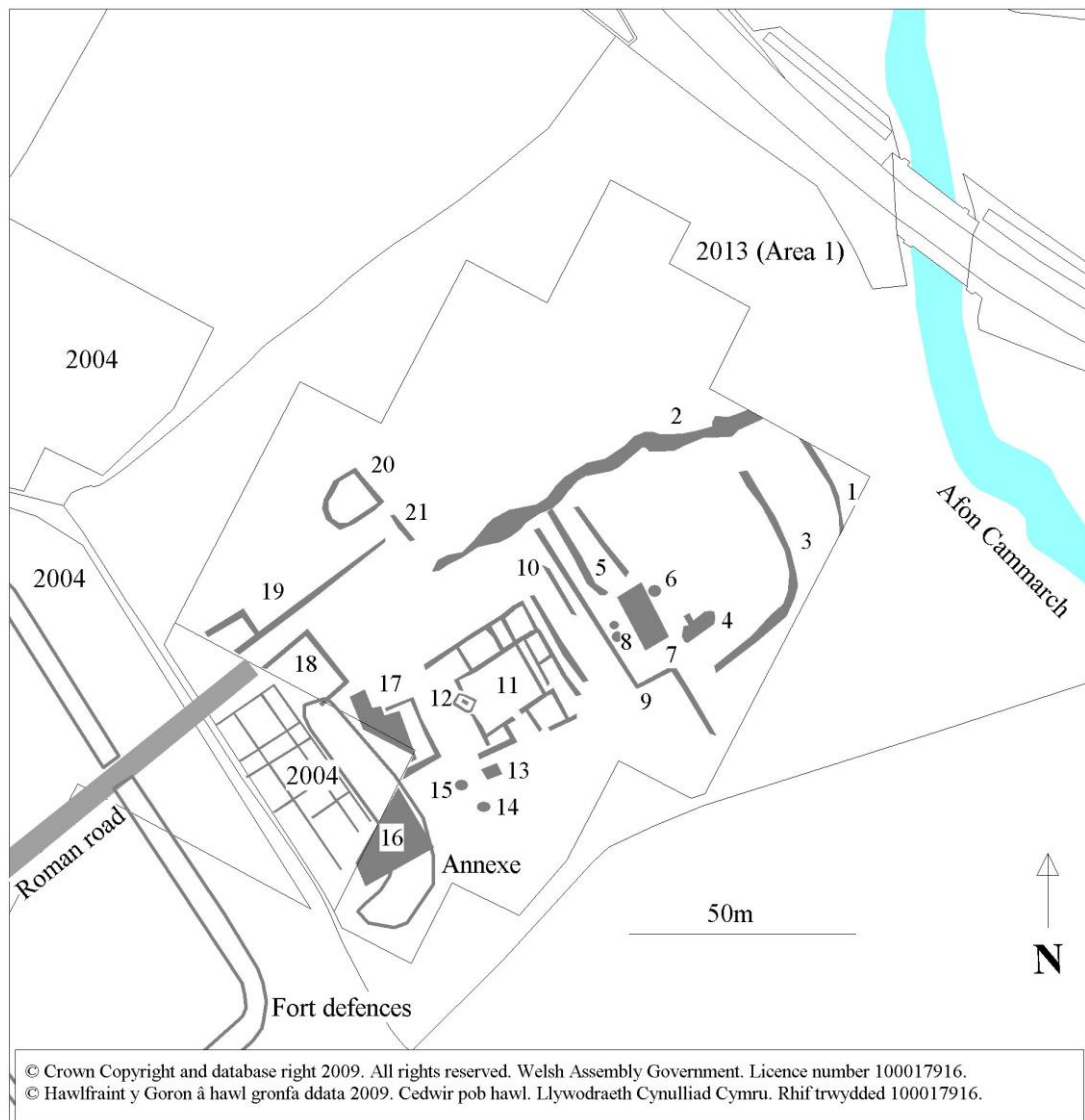


Fig. 6: Interpretation plan of the 2013 geophysics in Area 1

- 4.2.3 A series of more discrete anomalies, presumed to be pits, were centred at NGR SN 9257 5026; these included a large pit (4) measuring about 9.0m north-east/south-west by 3.5m wide, a single pit (6), about 2.5m in diameter, and a pair of adjacent pits (8), each up to about 2.0m in diameter. The area as a whole was quite ‘noisy’ but there was clearly a major anomaly (7) at its heart, displayed as a strong thermo-remnant response covering an area measuring about 13m north-west/south-east by 6m wide. This could be the bath-house; it is clearly an area which has seen significant burning and its shape suggests that this may have been within a rectangular structure. It may have utilised the nearby rivulet (2) as a source of water, supplied via two roughly parallel features (5), probably ditches, which were around 20m long and aligned north-west/south-east. A further parallel ditch (9), 66m in overall length, ran on the same alignment from anomaly 2 to the south-west of anomaly 7, turning north-east for 9m before returning to its previous alignment. Another parallel linear anomaly (10), to the south-west of anomaly 9, was only 12m long. The function of these two latter anomalies is unknown.

- 4.2.4 Upslope from the area described in the previous paragraph there was a complex of narrow linear features which appeared to combine to form a coherent structure (11). The structure covered an area measuring some 27m north-west/south-east by 26m north-east/south-west and its layout approximated to a central courtyard surrounded by at least eight rooms, two of which were fronted internally by what appeared to be a narrow passage on the north-east side of the courtyard. Although it was difficult to be certain, the entrance seemed to be on the south-east, but the geophysics results were rather less well-defined on the south-west, where the outer edge of the structure was not apparent; perhaps this reflects the increased build-up of soil on the upslope part of a building which was originally levelled into the slope. One curious feature was observed, apparently cutting the linear feature that defined the south-west side of the courtyard. This appeared to be a small, rectangular feature (12), comprising a rectilinear ditch covering an area of 4.6m west-north-west/east-south-east by 3.5m north-north-east/south-south-west; a possible central feature measuring 1.4m long by 0.8m wide was on the same alignment. Close examination of the results confirmed that the apparent feature was a processing artefact and not of archaeological interest.
- 4.2.5 To the south of structure 11 were a group of possible pits (13-15), up to 3.5m long and 3m wide, but showing no obvious pattern. At the upper (south-west) end of the field were a series of rectilinear anomalies (16-18), which clearly represented parts of structures already revealed by the geophysics in 2004. The nature of these structures remains unclear; they had been considered potentially to represent a bath-house in the report on the 2004 work.
- 4.2.6 The route of the Roman road which issued from the north-east gate of the fort is not immediately apparent in the results, although the location of the gate is clearly visible in the 2004 geophysics. There are some hints of disconnected linear alignments which imply a slightly meandering course for the road, but its line is no doubt defined by the north-west side of structure 18 and a probable linear ditch (19), the gap between these being approximately 4.5m. At the south-west end of ditch 19 there appears to have been a structure on its north-west side.
- 4.2.7 In the north-western part of the field, there is little evidence of further activity, beyond a curious D-shaped feature (20), which might represent an enclosure measuring 12m north-east/south-west by 10m north-west/south-east, and a short linear ditch (21), aligned north-west/south-east and about 7.5m long. This part of the field is fairly wet in parts, perhaps owing to the action of sub-surface springs, and this may have a bearing on the magnetic response of the soils. There is no conclusive evidence of any anomalies on the platformed area identified in 2012; this lies at the northern end of the geophysics area.
- 4.3 *Area 2*
- 4.3.1 Very few significant geophysical anomalies were seen in the results for Area 2, although the west-north-western end of the surveyed area suffered from background noise, probably caused by the local geology. The results are visible in Fig. 4, above, and their interpretation is presented as Fig. 7.
- 4.3.2 A 'herringbone' drainage system (22) was clearly of relatively modern origin, and what seemed to be an earlier drainage system (23) was also evident, probably comprising a levelled bank and ditch running west-north-west/east-south-east for about 100m, with a similar feature, about 20m long, joining it at an acute angle. The origin and dating of a probable pit (24), about 2.5m in diameter, remains unknown.



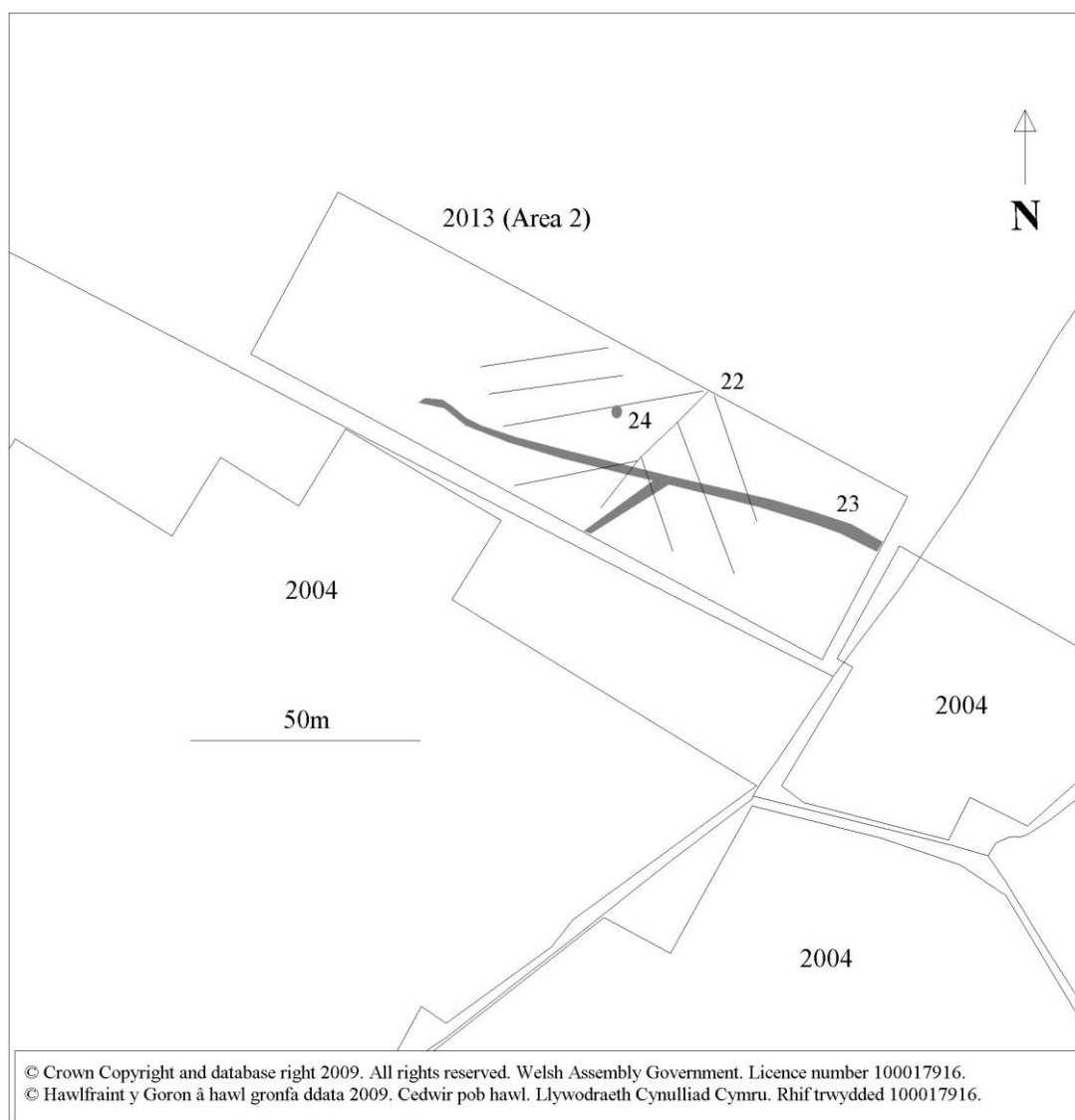
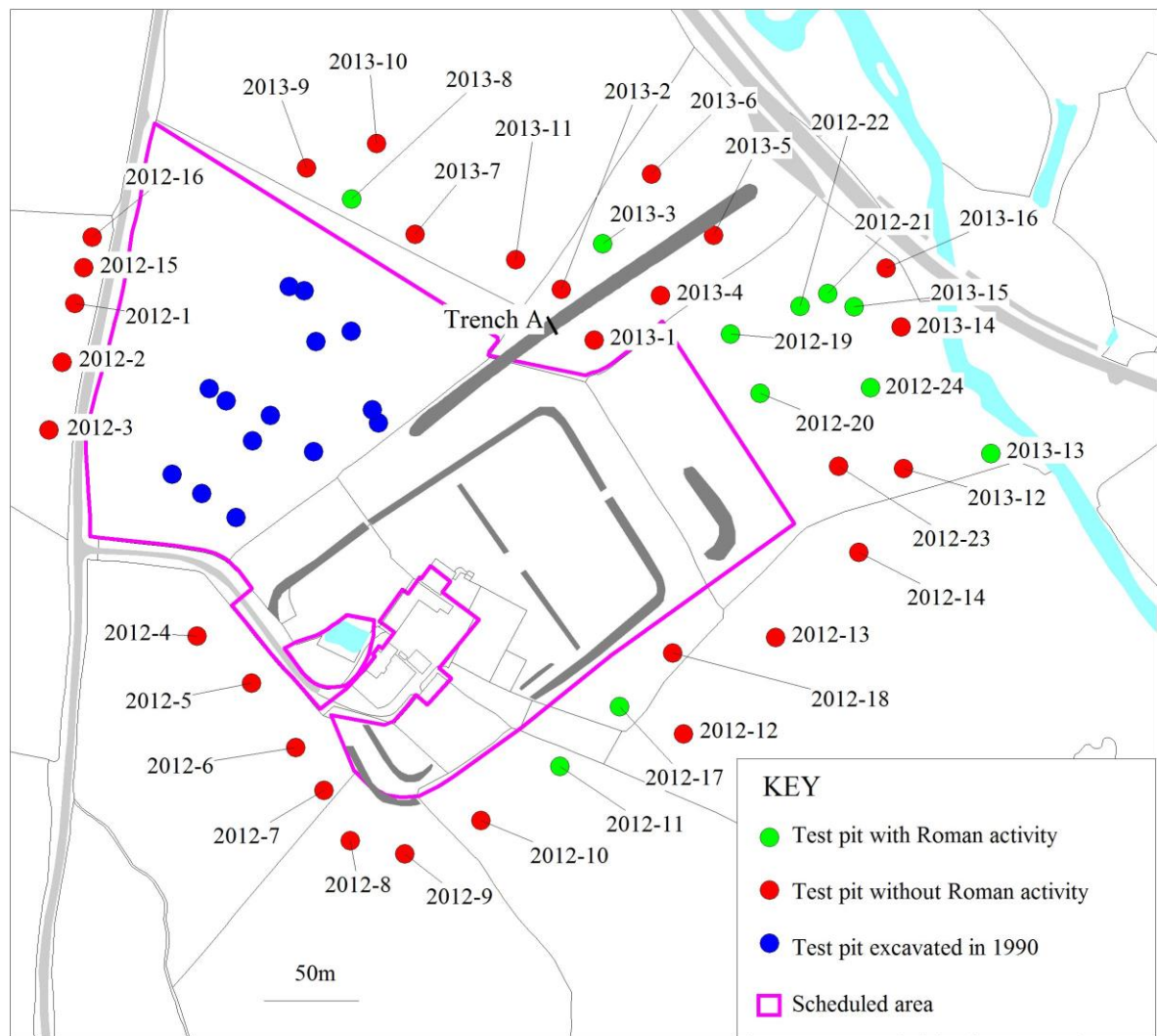


Fig. 7: Interpretation plan of the 2013 geophysics in Area 2

## 5 TEST PIT EXCAVATIONS

- 5.1 In total, 16 test pits (see Fig. 8), each approximately 1.0m to 1.2m square, were excavated by hand in the pastures to the north and north-east of the fort. One of these pits (No 3) was extended to 2m in length to encompass a feature which had been revealed. Each pit/investigation is described separately in the following text, with the numbers in brackets in this section referring to context descriptions given to individual layers or features detailed in the site archive.
- 5.2 Only those test pits which produced significant in-situ archaeological features are accompanied here by a photograph. The site archive is detailed below in Appendix 1 and comprises brief lists of the drawn, written and photographic records generated during the course of the excavations. Fig. 8 includes the results from the work in 2012 as well as 2013 and therefore provides a rapid visual impression of the areas where in-situ evidence of Roman activity was encountered. The test pits are numbered by year and their number within that year. Trench A is the excavation on the linear earthwork, detailed in Section 6.



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Fig. 8: Test pits excavated in 1990, 2012 and 2013, showing positive and negative evidence from the more recent work

### 5.3 *Test pit 1* (NGR SN 92447 50307)

5.3.1 The test pit was placed in the narrow field running down the the Afon Cammarch from the north corner of the fort. The ground in this field slopes gently to the north-east.

5.3.2 The natural, iron-rich grey clay subsoil (3) was present at a depth of 0.28m, and formed the base of the test pit. The overlying deposit of grey-brown clay silt (2), 0.10m thick, probably represented the lowest part of the ploughsoil and was itself overlain by the topsoil (1), a layer of almost stoneless grey-brown silt, 0.18m thick. No features or finds were observed in any of the layers.

### 5.4 *Test pit 2* (NGR SN 92430 50334)

5.4.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pit No 1, about 32m to the north-west of the latter.

5.4.2 The natural, orange-yellow clay (5) was present at a depth of 0.21m, and appeared throughout the base of the test pit. The overlying topsoil, a grey-brown silt with occasional stones, (4), was present up to ground level. No features or finds were observed in either of the layers.

5.5 *Test pit 3* (NGR SN 92452 50358)

5.5.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 1 and 2, about 32m north-east of No 2.

5.5.2 The natural, orangey-yellow clay (7) was present at a depth of between 0.18 and 0.24m, and was overlain by the local topsoil, a grey-brown silt (6). The initial excavation revealed the edge of a feature cutting into the natural subsoil, so the trench was extended to 2.0m north-west/south-east by 1.0m wide to determine its nature. The feature proved to be a narrow linear gully (10), up to 0.40m wide and 0.15m deep, on a north/south alignment. It was filled by a mid-grey clay silt (11), containing charcoal and Roman material and is therefore assumed to be of that date.



Fig. 9: Test pit 3 after excavation showing gully 10, from the north-west.  
Photo CPAT 3709-0039

5.6 *Test pit 4* (NGR SN 92482 50331)

5.6.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 1-3, about 42m north-east of No 1.

5.6.2 The natural pale grey, yellowish and orange clay subsoil (9) was present at a depth of between 0.17m and 0.22m, and appeared throughout the base of the test pit. It was overlain by the local topsoil, a waterlogged pale grey clay silt (8). No features or finds were observed in either of the layers.



5.7 *Test pit 5* (NGR SN 92510 50362)

5.7.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 1-4, about 42m north-east of No 4.

5.7.2 The natural orange-yellow clay subsoil (15) was present at a depth of 0.25m, where its surface had a fairly consistent covering of small angular stones up to 5cm in size. The overlying topsoil was a pale grey-brown clay silt (14), containing stones up to 0.15m across. No significant features or finds were observed in either of the layers.

5.8 *Test pit 6* (NGR SN 92478 50394)

5.8.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 1-5, about 45m north-east of No 3.

5.8.2 The natural orangey-yellow clay subsoil (13) was present at a depth of 0.20m, and appeared throughout the base of the test pit. It was overlain by the local topsoil, a grey-brown silt (12). No features or finds were observed in either of the layers.

5.9 *Test pit 7* (NGR SN 92353 50363)

5.9.1 The test pit was placed in the field to the north of the fort and known *vicus*, to assess the possibility that associated occupation evidence extended beyond the anomalies picked up by the geophysics. The ground here slopes gently to the north-east.

5.9.2 The natural pale grey clay subsoil (17) had a yellowish tinge and was present at a depth of 0.23m; it appeared throughout the base of the test pit. The overlying topsoil was a sticky grey-brown silt (16). No features or finds were observed in either of the layers.

5.10 *Test pit 8* (NGR SN 92319 50381)

5.10.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pit No 7, about 38m to its west-north-west.



Fig. 10: Test pit 8 after excavation, from north-east. Photo CPAT 3709-0050

- 5.10.2 Natural subsoil was not revealed in this test pit as the lowest layer, an orange stony silt (20), contained plentiful charcoal and a single sherd of Roman pottery and clearly represented activity of that date. The layer was found at a depth of 0.30m and was investigated by a small sondage to a further 0.10m, but continued beyond that depth. Layer 20 was overlain by a deposit of grey-brown stony silt (19), 0.05m in thickness and including further Roman material. The local topsoil was a grey-brown silt (18), 0.25m in thickness. No variations were observed in any of the layers.
- 5.11 *Test pit 9* (NGR SN 92295 50398)
- 5.11.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 7 and 8, about 29m north-west of No 8.
- 5.11.2 The natural orangey-yellow clay silt subsoil (33) was revealed at a depth of 0.28m throughout the base of the test pit. It was covered by a layer of grey-brown stony silt (32), 0.08m thick, itself overlain by the local topsoil, a grey-brown silt (31), 0.20m thick. No significant features or finds were observed in any of the layers.
- 5.12 *Test pit 10* (NGR SN 92332 50410)
- 5.12.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 7-9, about 32m north-north-east of No 8.
- 5.12.2 Natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.22m, comprising an orangey-yellow clay (35). It was covered by the local topsoil, a layer of grey-brown clay silt (34). No significant features or finds were observed in either of the layers.
- 5.13 *Test pit 11* (NGR SN 92406 50349)
- 5.13.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pits 7-10, about 55m east-south-east of No 7.
- 5.13.2 Natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.22m, comprising a layer of yellow-grey clay (41). It was covered by the local topsoil, a layer of grey-brown clay silt (40). No features or finds were observed in either of the layers.
- 5.14 *Test pit 12* (NGR SN 92611 50239)
- 5.14.1 The test pit was placed in the field to the north-east of the fort, running down to the Afon Cammarch. This is same field that was investigated by test pits 19-24 excavated in 2012.
- 5.14.2 Natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.30m, comprising a layer of compact gritty silt (54), which ranged from orange to grey in colour. It was covered by grey-brown gritty silt (53), up to 0.20m thick, and the local topsoil, a layer of grey-brown silt (52), 0.10m in thickness. No features were observed in any of the layers.
- 5.15 *Test pit 13* (NGR SN 92657 50247)
- 5.15.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pit 12, about 47m east of No 12. It was positioned on a level terrace next to the Afon Cammarch.
- 5.15.2 Natural subsoil was not revealed in this test pit as the lowest layer, a pale yellowish-grey gritty silt (59), contained plentiful charcoal and seemed likely to represent a Roman occupation deposit. The layer was found at a depth of 0.75m and tested to a thickness of at least 0.10m in a small sondage, but its base was not found. The overlying deposit of grey silt (58) was 0.15m thick and contained charcoal with flecks of fired clay and a single



hobnail. Again, this appeared to be a deposit signifying Roman activity. No features were observed in either of these layers.

- 5.15.3 Layer 58 was covered by a yellow-brown silt (57), 0.30m in thickness, whose sparse contents were abraded and appeared to have originated from Roman deposits higher up the slope. The two uppermost layers in the test pit were a grey-brown gritty silt (56), 0.18m thick, sealed by the topsoil, a layer of grey-brown silt (55), 0.12m thick.



Fig. 11: Test pit 13 after excavation, from east. Photo CPAT 3709-0092

5.16 *Test pit 14* (NGR SN 92609 50314)

5.16.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pit 12, about 74m to its north.

5.16.2 Natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.40m and comprised pale grey stony silt (62) overlying local shale bedrock. The overlying layer of grey-brown stony silt (61) was between 0.20m and 0.30m thick and contained a single fragment of Roman tile, though the layer itself is not necessarily Roman in origin. The local topsoil was a grey-brown silt, 0.10m in thickness. No features were observed in any of the layers.

5.17 *Test pit 15* (NGR SN 92585 50324)

5.17.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pit 12, about 27m west-north-west of No 14.

5.17.2 Natural subsoil was not revealed in this test pit as the lowest layer, a metalled surface comprising rounded stones, up to 0.10m in size, set in a matrix of pale orange-grey clay (66) was found at a depth of 0.25m; it was taken to represent the Roman road which exited from the north-east gate of the fort. The trench had been positioned to investigate a topographical feature that had been considered to define the possible line of the road and



whose edge was defined by a north-east/south-west aligned scarp, about 3.5m to the north-west of the test pit.

- 5.17.3 The overlying layers in the test pit were all thought to represent material disturbed by the plough, comprising a 0.10m thick layer of grey-brown stony silt (65), overlain by a 0.06m thick layer of small stones in grey-brown silt (64). The topsoil was a layer of grey-brown silt (63), 0.09m thick.



Fig. 12: Test pit 15 after excavation showing the surface of the assumed Roman road, from the east-north-east. Photo CPAT 3709-0102

5.18 *Test pit 16* (NGR SN 92601 50345)

5.18.1 The test pit was placed in the same field as test pit 12, about 27m north-east of No 15.

5.18.1 The natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.50m and comprised orange stony silt (69). The overlying layer of grey-brown stony silt (68) was 0.38m thick and contained a few tiny brick fragments, but was clearly disturbed. The local topsoil was a grey-brown silt, 0.12m in thickness. No features were observed in any of the layers.

## 6 LINEAR EARTHWORK EXCAVATION

- 6.1 The trench was excavated in the same field as test pits 1-6 and measured about 10.5m north-west/south-east by 1.5m wide. It extended south-east of the visible earthwork but was constrained by the presence of a modern drain on the north-west, although this was beyond the visible bank. After cleaning onto the in-situ layers of the bank, a sondage was taken out across half the width of the trench to establish the stratigraphy of the feature. It was not possible to remove the bank entirely in the sondage due to the flooding of the south-east end of the trench. Some further information was, however, gained by augering, particularly in the area to the north-west of the modern drain which restricted the extent of the trench.



Fig. 13: Linear earthwork trench location, from the north-east. The north corner of the fort lies behind the tree to the top left of the photograph. Photo CPAT 3709-0003

- 6.2 Natural subsoil, comprising pale yellow-grey stony clay (42), was only revealed in one small area towards the north-west end of the trench, where it had been exposed by the cut for a ditch (38), most of which extended beyond the excavation to the north-west. Restrictions on trench depth and extent imposed by the modern drain meant that the dimensions of the ditch could only be determined by augering, which gave a width of approximately 4.6m and a maximum depth of 1.0m. At least three layers were identified within the ditch, the earliest being a layer of pale grey clay (48), about 0.02m in thickness, which may have formed soon after the ditch was cut and contained a sherd of samian ware. Overlying this was a deposit of grey silt (39), at least 0.15m thick, which contained charcoal and Roman finds and the ditch then appeared to have been sealed by a layer of flattish stones in a matrix of grey silt (43), again containing material of solely Roman origin. It is possible that there were further layers but this could not be determined with certainty from the augering alone.





Fig. 14: The upper fills of the ditch in section, from the north-east. The modern drain lies immediately to the right, beyond the end of the trench. CPAT photo 3709-0086



Fig. 15: The makeup of the bank, from the north-east. Photo CPAT 3709-0076



- 6.3 Adjacent to the ditch on its south-east was a level area, perhaps 1.8m wide, best described as a *berm*. Beyond was the bank (46), which excavation and augering demonstrated to be about 4.2m wide and 0.8m high, resting on a layer of smooth orange-grey clay (49), 0.15m thick. The bank itself consisted of a dump of orange-yellow clay (36), whose thickness of 0.6m was determined by augering, and a dump of small stones in a matrix of grey clay silt (37), which lay to the south-east of (36) and was presumed to be of similar thickness. The upper surface of the dumped layers showed a 0.1m-wide band of mixed brown stony silt (51) at their junction on the crest of the bank, which might be evidence of a palisade.
- 6.4 At some point after the bank and ditch were constructed, material was deposited on the north-west side of the bank in the form of a sloping layer of charcoal and grey silt (44), and which seems to have covered the berm entirely. This seemed to overlie a 0.10m-thick layer of sticky grey-brown clay silt (45), which emerged from beneath it just above the edge of the ditch. Layer 44 was itself overlain by a layer of mixed yellow and grey clay and silt (28), up to 0.06m thick; this contained Roman finds and its origin seemed most likely to have been as material eroded from the surface of the dumped clay (36) of the bank. A similar layer of yellowish silt (47), 0.10m thick, lay above the stone layer (43) sealing the ditch, and it may be that these two layers were broadly contemporary.



Fig. 16: The ditch edge and associated deposits, from the north-west.  
Photo CPAT 3709-0081



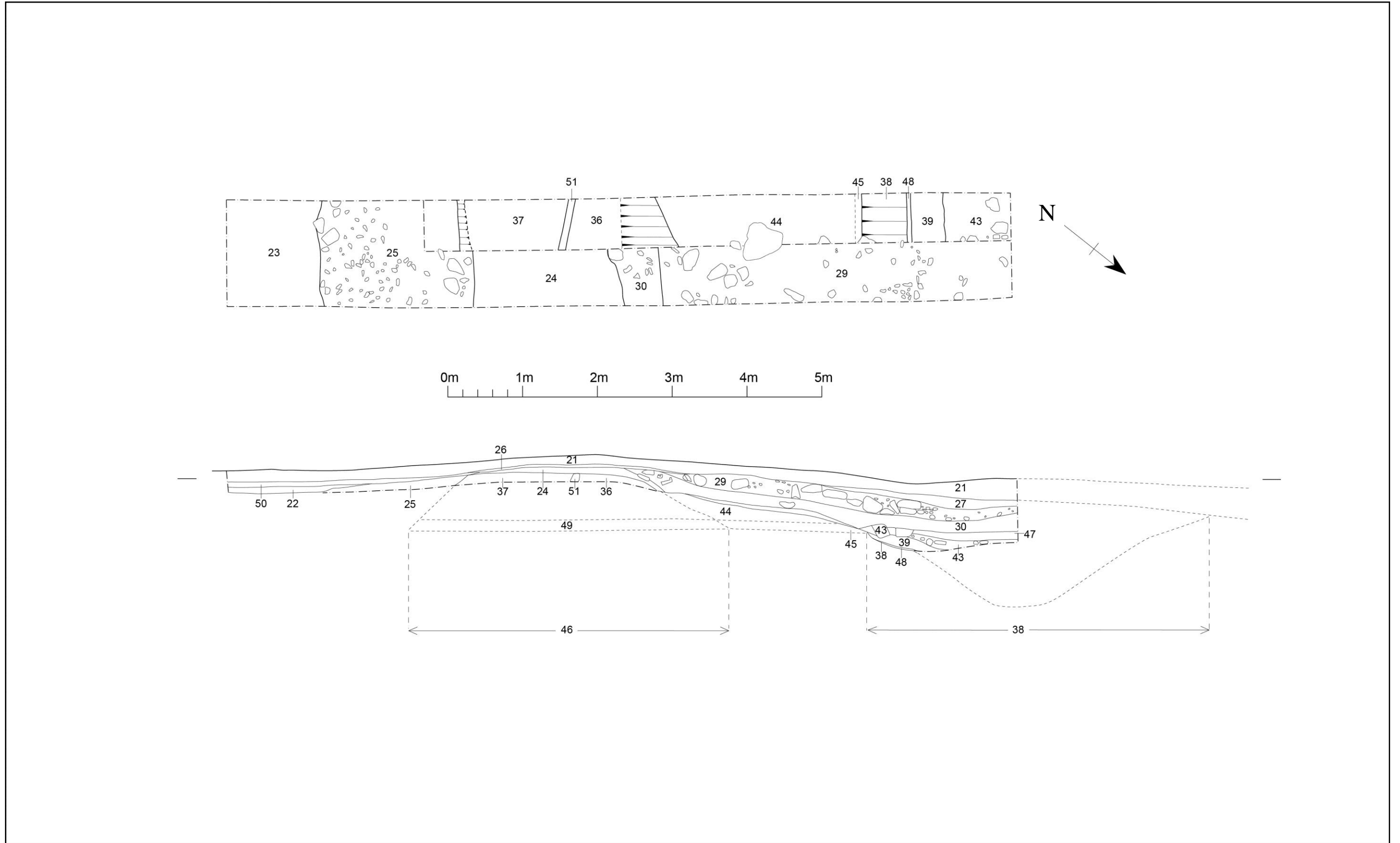


Fig. 17: Plan and section of the linear earthwork excavation

- 6.5 Later was a band of small stones forming a metallised surface (24), up to 0.10m in thickness and about 2.5m in overall width, that had been used to cap the bank deposits but overlay layer (44). The function of this layer is not certain but it may have allowed the later use of the bank as a trackway through this wet portion of the field. Subsequently, grey clay silt (30), up to 0.25m thick and containing a large amount of material of Roman date, was deposited on the slope of the bank and over the sealed ditch. Further material containing Roman finds, in the form of a layer up to 0.25m thick of large rounded stones in a matrix of brown gritty silt (29), was spread on the north-west slope of the bank; this material could have been obtained from the river. A further deposit of grey-brown stony silt (27), up to 0.15m thick, partially covered layer 29.
- 6.6 Excavation of the south-east slope of the bank was restricted by waterlogging, but there was some similarity to the north-west side in that a layer of rounded stones in a matrix of brown gritty silt (25), at least 0.12m thick, was no doubt contemporary with layer 29; it overlay the bank makeup. The relationship of layer 25 with what seemed to be an earlier deposit of pale grey clay (23) was impossible to determine owing to flooding at this end of the trench, but this latter deposit was covered by a mid-grey clay silt (22), up to 0.08m thick, whose upper surface was compacted and appeared to be a former ground surface. Layer 22 was overlain by soft grey-brown gritty clay silt (50), up to 0.06m thick, which included patches of peaty material lying within hollows in the underlying surface, clearly of relatively modern origin.
- 6.7 The uppermost layers in the trench were a thin band of loose small stones (26), 0.04m thick, which appeared to represent material disturbed from the metallised surface (24) and spread to either side. The rest comprised the local topsoil, a grey-brown silt (21), whose thickness varied from 0.1m on the crest of the bank to 0.3m to either side.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Sixteen test pits were excavated in the fields to the north and north-east of the fort in this year's programme of investigation at Caerau, adding to the twenty-four pits that were excavated in 2012. This work has improved our understanding of the Caerau *vicus* and has probably provided sufficient additional information broadly to determine its extent.
- 7.2 The results of the geophysics provided evidence for a building comprising a number of rooms arranged around a central courtyard in the field to the north-east of the fort. Close by to the north-east was a large anomaly whose size and appearance could be indicative of a bath-house, and there were other features visible in the geophysics results that may support this hypothesis, as they indicate what seems to be an associated water supply. This is now considered to be the most likely position for the bath-house, rather than on the platformed area to the north, which was discussed in 2012, although the latter may be the 'small ledge near the northern hedge boundary' referred to by Jones and Thomson (1958, 312), where they recorded a greater density of Roman pottery and building material than elsewhere on the slope below the fort. Various other features were visible in the geophysics, most of which were probably pits of Roman date.
- 7.3 The field to the north of the fort was largely devoid of geophysical anomalies relating to the *vicus*. Apart from a single pit, the features were all likely to represent post-medieval and modern drainage activity. Indeed, some of these may relate to the drainage works carried out at Caerau in the 1870s, when a range of Roman material was recovered. Only one of the test pits revealed evidence for in-situ Roman deposits, implying that this was on the extreme edge of the extra-mural Roman activity.

- 7.4 The test pitting carried out in 2012 provided sufficient evidence to enable the extent of the *vicus* to be determined on the north-west, south-west and south-east sides of the fort. This year's work has identified a number of additional areas of interest. Pit 13 investigated a small terrace next to the Afon Cammarch, which appears to have been used in the Roman period, although this is something of an outlying area in the field to the north-east of the fort, while pit 15 exposed the road which exited the north-east gate of the fort, confirming the geophysics results.
- 7.5 A narrow field between those to the north-east and north of the fort saw the excavation of a number of test pits and a section across an anomalous linear earthwork which has been considered to be of possible Roman date in the past. Only one of the test pits (No 3) produced evidence of Roman activity, in the form of a shallow gully, but this may simply be an early drainage feature. The linear earthwork proved to be a bank and ditch of Roman date, whose function appeared to be defensive, perhaps representing part of an annexe on the north-east side of the fort, and it may be related to the ditch recorded in test pit 24 in 2012. In view of the amount of pottery that was recovered, it may be possible to ascertain a broad date for the feature once the material has been assessed by a specialist.
- 7.6 Post-excavation processing work has commenced, and all finds have now been cleaned, sorted and appropriately packaged. At present, it is hoped that further work will be carried out at Caerau in 2014-15, so full quantification and reporting of the whole collection will not be undertaken until the next season has been completed. A specialist will then be consulted for identification and comments on the Roman pottery.



Fig. 18: The visit to site by Irfon Valley Primary School

- 7.7 A visit to the site was made by the staff and pupils of the local Irfon Valley County Primary School while the test pitting was in progress. This was part of an organised day of activities in which the pupils were given the opportunity to have firsthand experience of the practice of archaeology and thereby learn to appreciate the variety of skills that goes into the collection and investigation of archaeological data. Pupils handled, recorded and interpreted

artefacts. These activities allowed them to draw conclusions about the past and pinpoint differences between present and past. Most importantly, by visiting the site and asking questions of the archaeologists and the landowner, the pupils gained an understanding of the fragility of the archaeological record and this made them aware of their roles as potential wardens of the past.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 The writer would particularly like to thank Mr and Mrs Thomas, the landowners, for their support throughout and permission to carry out the work.
- 8.2 The writer would like to thank the following colleagues at CPAT for their assistance with the project: J Britnell, V Culshaw, N Jones, W Owen and S Watson. Thanks also are due to V Culshaw and S Watson for their contributions to the report.

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## 9.2 Cartographic sources

1889 Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 25" maps, Brecknock 10.7 and 10.8

1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map (Sheet 2 – Wales) and Legend (1:250,000 scale)

1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition at 1:250,000 scale)



**APPENDIX 1****SITE ARCHIVE**

109 digital photographs, CPAT Film No 3709

Photographic catalogue

69 context description forms

3 A1 site drawings, 3 A4 site drawings

Context register

Drawings register

Correspondence

*Digital data*

Location plans of test pits and other investigations – Caerau132 moved.dxf.

Rectified survey of earthworks north-east of the fort – Earthworks\_survey\_results.tab

*Geophysics*

Area 1 - Caer13b moved.dxf location plan; 33 grids, composites and graphics in folder Caer13B

Area 2 - Caer13 moved.dxf location plan; 14 grids, composites and graphics in folder Caer13

**Contexts Register**

<b>Context (Test pit/Trench)</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1 (1)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
2 (1)	Layer of stone	Subsoil/ploughsoil
3 (1)	Natural subsoil	
4 (2)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
5 (2)	Natural subsoil	
6 (3)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
7 (3)	Natural subsoil	
8 (4)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
9 (4)	Natural subsoil	
10 (3)	Gully	
11 (3)	Layer of fill	Fill of 10
12 (6)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
13 (6)	Natural subsoil	
14 (5)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
15 (5)	Natural subsoil	
16 (7)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
17 (7)	Natural subsoil	
18 (8)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
19 (8)	Layer of soil	Early ploughsoil ?
20 (8)	Layer of soil	Roman occupation layer
21 (A)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
22 (A)	Layer of soil	SE of bank-upper has an old ground surface
23 (A)	Layer of soil	To SE of bank-waterlogged, not examined
24 (A)	Layer of stone	Metalled surface on crest of bank
25 (A)	Layer of stone	To SE of bank-contemporary with 29
26 (A)	Layer of stone	Disturbed material from layer 24
27 (A)	Layer of soil	Late soil accumulation to NW of bank
28 (A)	Layer of soil	Silt-eroded from 36 ?
29 (A)	Layer of stone	To NW of bank-contemporary with 25
30 (A)	Layer of soil	Deposit on NW of bank, below 29

31 (9)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
32 (9)	Layer of soil	
33 (9)	Natural subsoil	
34 (10)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
35 (10)	Natural subsoil	
36 (A)	Dump of soil	Part of bank
37 (A)	Dump of soil	Part of bank
38 (A)	Ditch	c.4.6m wide and 1.0m deep
39 (A)	Layer of fill	Ditch silt
40 (11)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
41 (11)	Natural subsoil	
42 (A)	Natural subsoil	
43 (A)	Layer of stone	Stones sealing ditch
44 (A)	Layer of charcoal and soil	Deposit covering area of berm between bank 46 and ditch 38
45 (A)	Layer of soil	Silt beneath 44
46 (A)	Bank	c.4.2m wide and 0.8m high
47 (A)	Layer of soil	Silt similar to 28 but above ditch 38
48 (A)	Layer of fill	Possible early fill of ditch 38
49 (A)	Layer of soil	Band of clay beneath bank 46, revealed by augering
50 (A)	Layer of soil	Deposit on top of old ground surface (22) on SE of bank
51 (A)	Layer of soil	Possible fill of palisade trench, visible between bank constituents 36 and 37
52 (12)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
53 (12)	Layer of soil	
54 (12)	Natural subsoil	
55 (13)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
56 (13)	Layer of soil	
57 (13)	Layer of soil	Abraded finds – material from upslope ?
58 (13)	Layer of soil	Charcoal and fired clay flecks – Roman ?
59 (13)	Layer of soil	Plentiful charcoal – Roman ?
60 (14)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
61 (14)	Layer of soil	
62 (14)	Natural subsoil/rock	
63 (15)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
64 (15)	Layer of stone	
65 (15)	Layer of soil	
66 (15)	Roman road ?	Metalled surface on road alignment
67 (16)	Layer of soil	Topsoil
68 (16)	Layer of soil	
69 (16)	Natural subsoil	

### Drawings Register

No	Scale	Contexts	Comment
1	1:20	22,25-29,50	A1: Trench A preliminary plan
2	1:20	6,7,10,11	A4: Test pit 3 plan and section
3	1:20	Various	A1: Trench A after cleaning (plan)
4	1:20	29	A4: Trench A intermediate plan (NW end)
5	1:20	23,25	A4: Trench A intermediate plan (SE end)
6	1:20	Various	A1: Trench A final plan and section